

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY 1902.

THE INTRUSIONS OF PEGGY.¹

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING A CERTAIN CHINA VASE.

At this point Trix Trevalla's fortunes impose on us a timid advance into the highest regions, where she herself trod with an unaccustomed foot. Her reception was on the whole gratifying. The Barmouths could not indeed be entirely pleased when their only son proposed to make a match so far from brilliant; but after all the Trevallas were gentlefolk, and (a more important point) the Barmouths had such a reverence for Mervyn that he might have imitated the rashness of King Cophetua without encountering serious opposition. His parents felt that he ennobled what he touched, and were willing to consider Trix as ennobled accordingly. They were very exclusive people, excluding among other things, as it sometimes seemed, a good deal of what chanced to be entertaining and amusing. It does not, however, do to quarrel with anybody's ideal of life; it is simpler not to share it.

Roguish nature had created Lord Barmouth very short, stout, and remarkably unimposing; he made these disadvantages vanish by a manner of high dignity not surpassed even by his tall and majestic wife. They had a very big house in Kent, within easy reach of London, and gave Saturday-to-Monday parties, where you might meet the people you had met in London during the week. There was a large hall with marble pillars round it, excellently adapted for lying in state, rather chilly perhaps if it

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were considered as a family hearth; Lord Barmouth was fond of walking his guests up and down this hall, and telling them what was going to happen to the country—at least, what would, if it were not for Mortimer.

‘On the whole I’d sooner go to the dogs and not have Mortimer,’ Lady Blixworth had declared after one of these promenades.

The Glentorlys, Lady Blixworth and Audrey Pollington, three or four men—Constantine Blair among them—Mrs. Bonfill, Trix herself, and Mervyn, all came down in a bunch on Saturday evening—a few days after Trix had promised to marry Mervyn, but before any formal announcement had been made. The talk ran much on Beaufort Chance: he was pitied and condemned; he was also congratulated on his resignation—that was the proper thing to do. When this was said, glances turned to Mrs. Bonfill. She was discreet, but did not discourage the tacit assumption that she had been somehow concerned, and somehow deserved credit.

‘It is vital—vital—to make an example in such cases,’ said Barmouth at dinner. He had a notion that the force of an idea was increased by reiterating the words which expressed it.

‘We naturally feel great relief,’ said Mervyn. (By ‘We’ he meant the Ministry.)

‘It’s straining a point to let him stay in the House,’ declared Glentorly.

‘The seat’s shaky,’ murmured Constantine Blair. Mervyn’s eye accused him of saying the wrong thing.

Trix, from conscience or good-nature, began to feel sorry for Beaufort Chance.

‘Resist the beginnings—the beginnings,’ said Lord Barmouth. ‘The habit of speculation is invading all classes.’

‘Public men, at least, must make a stand,’ Mervyn declared.

The corners of Lady Blixworth’s mouth were drooping in despair. ‘What I go through for that girl Audrey!’ she was thinking, for she had refused a most pleasant little dinner-and-theatre party in town. She was not in a good temper with Trix Trevalla, but all the same she shot her a glance of understanding and sympathy.

‘Now persons like this Fricker are pests—pests,’ pursued Barmouth.

‘Oh, Mr. Fricker’s really a very good-natured man,’ protested Trix, who was on her host’s left hand.

'You know him, Mrs. Trevalla?' Lord Barmouth did not conceal his surprise.

'Oh, yes!'

'Mrs. Trevalla knows him just slightly, father,' said Mervyn.

Lord Barmouth attained a frigid amiability as he said with a smile: 'Used to know him, perhaps you'll say now?'

'That's better, Trix, isn't it?' smiled Mrs. Bonfill.

Lady Blixworth's satirical smile met Trix across the table. Trix felt mean when she did no more than laugh weakly in response to Barmouth's imperious suggestion. She understood what Lady Blixworth meant.

'If we cut everybody who's disreputable,' observed that lady sweetly, 'we can all live in small houses and save up for the Death Duties.'

'You're joking, Viola?' Lady Barmouth complained; she was almost sure of it.

'For my part, if Mr. Fricker will put me on to a good thing—isn't that the phrase, Mortimer?—I shall be very grateful and ask him to dinner—no, lunch; he can come to that without Mrs. Fricker. Why, you used to stand up for them, Sarah!'

'Things are different now,' said Mrs. Bonfill, with a touch of severity.

'Mrs. Bonfill means that circumstances have changed—changed completely,' Lord Barmouth explained.

'I thought she must mean that,' murmured Lady Blixworth gratefully.

'You can't touch pitch without being defiled—defiled,' remarked Lord Barmouth with an unpleasantly direct look at Trix. Everybody nodded with a convinced air.

'That's right, Barmouth,' said Sir Stapleton Stapleton-Staines, a gentleman with a good estate in that part of the country. 'In my opinion that's right.'

That being settled, Lady Barmouth rose.

Next morning after church (everybody went except Lady Blixworth, who had announced on going to bed that she would have a headache until lunch) Mervyn took Trix for a walk round the place. It was then for the first time, her fright wearing off, that the truth of the position flashed on her in all its brilliance. She was no mere Saturday-to-Monday visitor; she had come to see what was to be her home; she was to be mistress of it all some day. Mervyn's words, and his manner still more, asserted this and

reminded her of it every moment : the long stately façade of the house, the elaborate gardens, the stretches of immemorial turf, all the spacious luxury of the pleasure-grounds, every fountain, every statue, he pointed out, if not exactly for her approval, yet as if she had a right to an account of them, and was to be congratulated on their excellence. 'I have a great deal to give—look at it all. I give it all to you!' Some such words summarise roughly Mervyn's tone and demeanour. Trix grew eager and excited as the fumes of greatness mounted to her head; she hugged the anticipation of her splendour. What a victory it was! Think of the lodging-houses, the four years with Vesey Trevala, the *pensions*, think even of the flat—the flat and the debts—and then look round on this! Was not this the revenge indeed?

And the price? She had learnt enough of the world now to be getting into the way of expecting a price. But it seemed very light here. She liked Mervyn, and not much more than that degree of feeling seemed to be expected of her. He was fond of kissing her hand in a rather formal fashion; when he kissed her cheek there was a hint of something that she decided to call avuncular. No display of passion was asked from her. All she had to do was to be a particularly good girl; in view of the manner of the whole family towards her, she could not resist that way of putting it. So long as she was a good girl they would be very kind to her. 'But we can't have pranks—pranks,' she seemed to hear her future father-in-law declaring. Against pranks they would be very firm. Like speculation, like the Frickers, pranks might invade every class of society, but they would find no countenance from the house of Barmouth.

Well, pranks are a small part of life, after all. One may like to think of a few as possible, but they are surely of no great moment. Trix thoroughly understood the gently congratulatory manner which the company assumed towards her. Audrey Pollington was wistfully and almost openly envious; she sat between two fountains, looking at the house and announcing that she would ask no more than to sit there always. Mrs. Bonfill, who could never be in a big house without seeming to own it, showed Trix all over this one, and kissed her twice during the process. Lord Barmouth himself walked her round and round the hall after lunch, and told her a family reminiscence for each several pillar that they passed. Only in Lady Blixworth's eyes did

Trix find an expression that might be malice, or, on the other hand, conceivably might be pity. A remark she made to Trix as they sat together in the garden favoured the latter view, although of course the position of affairs tended to support the former.

'I suppose you haven't had enough of it yet to feel anything of the kind,' she said, 'but, for my part, sometimes I feel as if I should like to get drunk, run out into the road in my petticoat, and scream!'

'I don't think Lord Barmouth would let you come back again,' laughed Trix.

'I suppose Sarah's trained you too well. Look at Sarah! It wasn't forced on her; she needn't have had it! She would have it, and she loves it.'

'There's a great deal to love in it,' said Trix, looking round her.

'Everything, my dear, except one single fandango! Now I love a fandango. So I go about looking as if I'd never heard of one.' She turned to Trix. 'I shouldn't wonder if you loved a fandango too?'

'I haven't had many,' said Trix, it must be owned with regret.

'No, and you won't now,' remarked Lady Blixworth.

There was no use in keeping up the fiction of a secret.

'I shall have to be very good indeed,' smiled Trix.

'Oh, it's just splendid for you, of course!' The natural woman and the trained one were at issue in Lady Blixworth's heart. 'And I daresay one might love Mortimer. Don't be hurt—I'm only speculating.'

'He's everything that's good, and distinguished, and kind.'

Lady Blixworth looked round cautiously, smiled at Trix, and remarked with the utmost apparent irrelevance, 'Fol-de-rol!'

Then they both laughed.

'Hush! Here comes Sarah! Don't look thoughtful, or she'll kiss you. Kisses are a remedy for thought sometimes, but not Sarah's.'

Trix did not regard the absence of pranks and fandangoes as an inseparable accident of high degree—there facts might have confuted her—but it certainly seemed the most striking characteristic of the particular exalted family to which she was to belong. The guests left on Monday; Trix remained for the week, alone with her prospective relations. Mervyn ran up to his office two

or three times, but he was not wanted in the House, and was most of the time at Barslett, as the place was called. Everything was arranged; the engagement was to be announced immediately; Trix was in the house on the footing of a daughter. For some reason or another she was treated—she could not deny it—rather like a prodigal daughter; even her lover evidently thought that she had a good deal to learn and quite as much to forget. All the three were industrious people, all wanted her to understand their work, all performed it with an unconcealed sense of merit. Lord Barmouth was a churchman and a farmer; Lady Barmouth was a politician and a housekeeper; Mervyn, besides going to be Prime Minister, was meditating a *Life of Burke*. ‘One never need be idle in the country,’ Barmouth used to say. To Trix’s mind he went far to rob the country of its main attraction. She felt that she would have bartered a little splendour against a little more liveliness. Was this to repent of her bargain? No, in truth! She was always giving thanks that she had done so magnificently, got out of all her troubles, sailed prosperously into a haven so ample and so sure. Yet Lady Blixworth’s untutored impulse recurred to her now and then, and met with a welcoming smile of sympathy. Airey Newton and Peggy Ryle came into her mind, too, on occasion; their images were dismissed with a passing sigh.

What annoyed her most was that she found her courage failing. The high spirit that had defied Beaufort Chance, braved Fricker, and treated almost on equal terms with Mrs. Bonfill, seemed cowed by the portentous order, decorum, usefulness, industry, and piety that now encircled her in a ring-fence of virtue. Day by day she became more afraid of this august couple and their even more august son, her lover and chosen husband. She had said that she must be a good girl in fun at first, as a burlesque on their bearing towards her. Really truth threatened to overtake the burlesque and make it rather fall short of than exaggerate or caricature her feelings. She would never dare to rebel, to disregard, or to question. She would be good—and she would be good because she would be afraid to be anything else. Of course the world would know nothing of that—it would see only the splendour—but she would know it always. Under the fine robes there would be golden chains about her feet. If her ideal of life had demanded freedom besides everything else, it was like to share the fate of most ideals.

'Oh, if I had the courage to defy them! Perhaps I shall when I'm married!'

No, she feared that she never would—not thoroughly nor without a quaking heart at least. Not because they were particularly wise or clever, or even supernaturally good. Rather because they were so established, so buttressed by habit, so entrenched by the tradition of their state. Defiance would seem rebellion and sacrilege in one. Trix had no difficulty in imagining any one of the three ordering her to bed; and (oh, worst humiliation!) she knew that in such a case she would go, and go in frightened tears. Such an absurd state of mind as this was intolerably vexatious.

'When you were a boy, were you afraid of your father and mother?' she asked Mervyn once.

'Afraid!' He laughed. 'I never remember having the least difference with either of them.'

That was it; nobody ever would have any differences in that family.

'I'm rather afraid of them,' she confessed. When he smiled again she added, 'And of you too.'

'How silly!' he said gently. It was, however, tolerably plain that he was neither surprised nor displeased. He took the fear to which she owned as a natural tribute to the superiority of the family, a playful feminine way which she chose to express her admiration and respect. He kissed her affectionately—as if she had been very good. No doubt, if there were bed when necessary, there would, on suitable occasions, be sugar-plums too. To Trix Trevalla, erstwhile rebel, gaoler, wanderer, free-lance, the whole thing seemed curiously like a second childhood, very different from her first, and destined to continue through her life.

'It'll make a slave or a liar of me, I know,' she thought. But she thought also that, if she spoke to Lady Blixworth in that vein, she would be asked on what grounds she expected to escape the common lot. It would probably make her both a liar and a slave, Lady Blixworth would say with her languid smile; but then the compensations! Even Lady Blixworth's wild impulse was admittedly only occasional, whereas she had a standing reputation for refinement and elegance.

An example of what was going to happen all her life occurred on the last day of her visit, the last day, too, before the world was to hail her as the future Lady Mervyn. She was sitting by

Mervyn, reading a book while he wrote. The post came in, and there was a letter for her. While he attacked his pile, she began on her one. It was from Fricker. A quick glance assured her that Mervyn's attention was fully occupied.

Mr. Fricker's letter opened very cordially and ran to a considerable length. It was concerned with Dramoffskys, and told her that he had sold her holding, considering that step on the whole the wisest thing in her interest. Owing, however, to a great variety of unforeseen events—more rumours, new complications, further anxiety as to what the Tsar meant to do—he regretted to inform her that he had for once miscalculated the course of the market. Dramoffskys had fallen rather severely; he would not take the responsibility of saying whether or when they would be likely to rise to the price at which she had bought—much less go higher. They would be worse before they were better—long before—was the conclusion at which he arrived with regret. So that in fine, and omitting many expressions of sorrow, it came to this: out of her five thousand pounds he was in a position to hand back only a sum of 2,301*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*, which amount he had had the pleasure of paying to her account at her bank. 'I will advise you subsequently as to *Glowing Stars*,' he ended, but Trix had no thoughts to spare for *Glowing Stars*.

The blow was very severe. She had counted on a big profit, she was faced with a heavy loss. She did not suspect Fricker's good faith, but was aghast at her own bad luck.

'How horrible!' she exclaimed aloud, letting the letter fall in her lap. Even for a moment more she forgot that she was sitting by Mervyn.

'What's the matter, dear?' he asked, turning round. 'No bad news in your letter, I hope?'

'No, nothing serious, nothing serious,' she stammered, making a hasty clutch at the two big typewritten sheets of paper.

'Are you sure? Tell me about it. You must tell me all your troubles.' He stretched out his hand and pressed hers. She crumpled up the letter.

'It's nothing, really nothing, Mortimer.'

'Do you cry out "How horrible!" about nothing?' His smile was playful; such a course of conduct would be plainly unreasonable. 'Whom is it from?' he asked.

'It's from my servant, to tell me she's broken a china vase

I'm very fond of,' said Trix in a smooth voice, quite fluently, her eyes fixed on Mervyn in innocent grief and consternation.

Fortunately he was not an observant man. He had noticed neither the typewriting nor Trix's initial confusion. He patted her hand, then drew it to him and kissed it, saying with a laugh:—

'I'm glad it's no worse. You looked so frightened.' Then he turned back to his letters.

Presently Trix escaped into the garden in a tempest of rage at herself. She was thinking no more of the treacherous conduct of Dramoffskys, but of herself.

'That's what I shall always do!' she exclaimed to the trim lawns and the sparkling fountains, to the stately façade that was some day to salute her as its mistress. 'How easily I did it, how naturally!' She came to a pause. 'I'll go in and tell him.' She took a step or two towards the house, but stopped again. 'No, I can't now.' She turned away, saying aloud, 'I daren't!'

The thought flashed into her mind that he would be very easy to deceive. It brought no comfort. And if he ever found out! She must end all connection with Fricker, anyhow. She could not have such an inevitable source of lies about her as that business meant.

'How easily I did it!' she reflected to herself again in a sort of horror.

Mervyn told the story at dinner, rallying Trix on her exaggerated consternation over the news. Lady Barmouth took up the cudgels for her, maintaining a housewife's view of the importance and preciousness of household possessions. Lord Barmouth suggested that perhaps the vase was an heirloom, and asked Trix how she became possessed of it, what was it like, what ware, what colour, what size, and so forth. Thence they passed, under Lady Barmouth's guidance, to the character of the servant, to her previous record in the matter of breakages, comparing her incidentally in this and other respects with a succession of servants who had been at Barslett. Steadily and unflinching, really with great resource and dexterity, Trix equipped both servant and vase with elaborate histories and descriptions, and agreed with the suggestion that the vase might perhaps be mended, and that the servant must be at least seriously warned as to what would happen in the event of such a thing ever occurring again. The topic with its ramifications lasted pretty well through the meal, Trix imagining

all the time every sort of unlikely catastrophe which might possibly result in her dressing-case falling into the hands of the family and Mr. Fricker's letter being discovered therein.

Well, there was nothing for it; she must be good. If she would not go on lying, she must obey. There was some of the old hardness about her eyes and her lips as she came to this conclusion. She was not, after all, accustomed to having everything just as she liked. That had been only a dream, inspired by Airey Newton's words at Paris; when put to the test of experience, it had not borne the strain. She was to belong to the Barmouths, to be admitted to that great family; she would pay her dues.

She was very sweet to Mervyn that evening; there was a new submission in her manner, a strong flavour of the dutiful wife. From afar Lord Barmouth marked it with complacency and called his wife's attention to it.

'Yes, and I liked her for thinking so much about her vase, poor child,' said Lady Barmouth.

'In my opinion she will be a success—a success,' said he. 'After all, we might have been sure that Mortimer would make a suitable choice.'

'Yes, and Sarah Bonfill thoroughly approves.'

Lord Barmouth's expression implied that Mrs. Bonfill's approval might be satisfactory, but could not be considered essential. In such matters the family was a sufficient law unto itself.

The next day Trix went up to town. At the station Mervyn gave her a copy of the 'Times' containing the announcement that a marriage had been arranged between them. His manner left nothing to be desired—by any reasonable person at least; and he promised to come and see her on his way to the House next day. Trix steamed off with the 'Times' in her hand, and the hum of congratulation already sounding in her expectant ears.

She lay back in the railway carriage, feeling tired but content—too tired, perhaps, to ask whence came her content. The hum of congratulation, of course, had something to do with it. Had escaping from Barslett something to do with it too? Lazily she gave up the problem, threw the 'Times' aside, and went to sleep.

When the train was nearing London, she awoke with a start. She had been having visions again; they had come while she slept—strange mixtures of the gay restaurant and of dingy Danes Inn; a room where Airey Newton smoked his pipe, where the

only sound was of Peggy Ryle's heart-whole laughter; a dream of irresponsibility and freedom. She laughed at herself as she awoke, caught up the paper again, and re-read that important announcement. There lay reality; have done with figments! And what a magnificent reality it was! She stepped out on to the platform at Charing Cross with conscious dignity.

At the flat it rained telegrams; from everybody they came—from the Bonfills, the Glentorlys—yes, and the Farringhams; from crowds of less-known people. There was one from Viola Blixworth, and there was one from Peggy Ryle. She accorded this last the recognition of a little sigh. Then she went to dress for a dinner party. Her entry into the drawing-room that evening would be the firstfruits of her triumph. She thought no more about the china vase.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE.

FOR years a man may go on not perceiving nor understanding what he is doing with his life, failing to see not merely whither it is tending under his guidance, but even the various points at which from time to time it arrives. Miles Childwick had recommended a frame of mind affected with, or even devoted to, this blindness when he argued against the Fallacy of Broad Views; perhaps, like some other things that do not as a rule work well, it would work well enough if it could be maintained with absolute consistency. But a breakdown is hard to avoid. Something happens to the man, or, just as often, to another whom he knows and has watched as he has not watched his own doings; in the light of it he discerns hidden things about himself. He may find that he has given fame the go-by, or power, or the attainment of great place; he may groan over the discovery, or he may say *Vile damnum* and go back to his unobtrusive industry or his leisurely study. He may discover that he is not useful, and be struck with remorse, or, on the other hand, inspired to a sceptical defiance of the obligation; he may see that nobody is likely ever to think much of him or to care much about him, and smile at their rightness or their wrongness as his opinion leads him, and be annoyed or resigned as his temperament dictates. Or he may awake to a sense of some loss at once vaguer and larger than

any of those hitherto suggested, a loss not of any particular thing, however desirable, out of life, but a loss of life itself; he has abdicated legitimate pretensions, drawn back his boundaries, thrown away part of his inheritance, denied to his being some of the development to which it was inherently able to attain. A man who arrives at this conclusion must be of a very unusual temper if he does not suffer disquietude and discontent. It is easy to maintain that any given object of ambition, or even that any chosen excellence, is not indispensable; it needs more resolution to say that it is immaterial and no ground for regret that a man has been less of a man, a narrower creature, than it lay in his power to be; that he has stopped when he might have gone forward, and fallen into the habit of saying 'no' when he ought to have cultivated the practice of saying 'yes.' It is difficult for him to vindicate to himself his refusal of the fulness of life according as the measure of his ability would have realised it for him. It is nothing to say that he has had as much as, or more than, A, B, or C. He agrees scornfully. Has he taken as much as he himself could have claimed by the right of his nature and faculties? That seems the primeval obligation, Nature's great command, to be obeyed in ten thousand different ways, but always to be obeyed.

'Do you live?' Trix Trevala had once asked Airey Newton. He had answered, 'Hardly.' Yet, when he said that, consciousness of the truth had been very dim and faint in him, just nascent perhaps, but unable to assert itself against things stronger in his soul. If it had grown from that time onward, the growth had been unmarked and almost imperceptible. He had his great delight, his preoccupation and propensity; that had still seemed enough. His renewed meeting with Trix, especially that talk of theirs after his dinner party, had forwarded matters another stage. The news of her engagement to Mervyn seemed the cue on which voices long silenced in him spoke aloud—not, indeed, in unreserved praise of Trix, a line permissible neither to his conception of the case nor to truth itself, but in an assertion that she was at least trying for what he had let slip, was reaching out her hands to the limit of life, was trying what the world could do for her. And, as he understood, she dated this effort back to his advice. In the irony of that thought he found the concrete instance needed to give unity, force, and clearness to the vague murmurs of his spirit.

His mood bred no action ; what stood between ? First, a sense that he was too late ; the feeling that Trix had awakened centred on her ; she was to him part, an essential part, of the full life as it rose before his eyes ; and, in fact, she was nothing to him. He would have liked to be content with that answer. But there was another ; the red book and the safe still stood in the corner of his room. A divination of the true deity is but a small step towards robbing the old idol of his time-consecrated power. Airey Newton was left crying 'Impossible !' in answer to his own demand for the stir of life which Trix Trevalla embodied for him. Trix herself had wistfully given the same answer when Peggy Ryle made her long for the joy of it.

A week after the news which had such a peculiar significance for one man as well as its obvious social importance to many people, Peggy Ryle dropped in at Danes Inn and ate bread-and-butter in a complimentary sort of way. She also wanted another fifty pounds from her hoard, but she meant to lead up to this gently, as she had observed that Airey disapproved of her extravagance, and handed out her money to her with reluctance.

'Well, Airey, I suppose you haven't heard anything that's happening ?' she said.

'Probably not,' he agreed with a grim smile. 'You're in the thick of it all ?'

'For the present,' Peggy replied cautiously. 'I'm considered an heiress, and they ask me everywhere. Mrs. Bonfill has offered to take me out ! I'm great, Airey. And I've gone to lots of places with Mrs. Trevalla.'

'She's great too ?'

'Oh, yes, much greater. A new loaf to-day ?'

'I thought you were about due. Want some more money ?'

'How nice of you to suggest it !' cried Peggy in relieved gratitude. 'Just fifty, please—to pay for a frock, a supper, a box, and incidental expenses.'

'I think you'd better fit yourself up with a rich match, like Mrs. Trevalla. You'll be in the workhouse in three months.'

'I've been there before. Lots of friends always there, Airey.' Her nod and smile included him in the number with an affectionate gratitude. 'And I don't know that Mrs. Trevalla is to be envied so particularly. I daresay it's very nice to be married in

a cathedral, but it's not as inviting to be married to one—and it's what Lord Mervyn reminds me of.' She paused and then added, 'Trix isn't in love with him, of course.'

Undoubtedly Airey Newton was glad to hear that, though with no joy which can rank above a dog-in-the-manger's. However he made no comment on it.

'And who's in love with you?' he asked.

'Two or three men, Airey,' replied Peggy composedly—'besides Miles, I mean.' Miles's affection was composed, but public. 'Miles renewed his offer on hearing that I had come into money. He said that the circumstance freed his action from any offensive appearance of benevolence.'

'And you said no?'

'I never say no to Miles. I never can do anything but laugh. It would be just perfect if he didn't mean it.' In spite of her sympathy Peggy laughed again. 'I wish you were rich and were going to marry Trix Trevalla,' she resumed. 'She's very fond of you, you know, Airey.'

'Stuff!' growled Airey unceremoniously.

'Well, of course,' sighed Peggy, glancing round the room.

A man may say 'Stuff!' and yet not be over-pleased to have it greeted with 'Of course!' Airey grumbled something into his pipe; Peggy smiled without hearing it.

'Well, I mean she'd never marry anybody who wasn't well-off,' she explained. 'She couldn't, you see; she's very extravagant. I'm sure she spends more than she's got. But that doesn't matter now.'

'And perhaps you needn't be very severe on it,' Airey suggested.

'You gave an enormous dinner,' Peggy retorted triumphantly.

Airey began to walk about the room, giving an occasional and impatient tug at his beard.

'What's the matter?' asked Peggy, noting these signs of disturbance.

'Nothing,' said Airey fretfully. 'You needn't talk as if I was a pauper,' he broke out the next moment.

Here was something strange indeed. Never before had he resented any implied reference to his poverty; nay, he had rather seemed to welcome it; and in their little circle everybody took the thing as a matter of course. But Airey stood there looking resentful or at least ashamed, and greatly hurt anyhow. Peggy

was terribly upset. She jumped up and ran to him, holding out her hands.

'How could I?' she cried. 'I had no idea—— Dear Airey, do forgive me! I never thought of hurting your feelings! How can you think that I or any of us mind a scrap whether you're rich or poor?' There were tears in her eyes, and she would not be refused a grasp of his hands. 'You thought I took it all—all you give me—and then sneered at you!' gasped Peggy.

'I'm comfortably off,' said Airey, stiffly and obstinately.

'Yes, yes; of course you are. I'll never say anything of the sort again, Airey.' She let go his hands with a reluctant slowness; she missed the hearty forgiveness for which she had begged. He puzzled her now.

'I have money for everything I need. I don't pose as being poor.'

'Oh, you mustn't take it like that,' she groaned, feeling fit to cry in real earnest, conceiving him to be terribly wounded, sure now that he had squandered his resources on the dinner because among them they had made him ashamed of being poor. She could not herself understand being ashamed of poverty, but she had an idea that many people were—especially men perhaps, to whom it properly belonged to labour, and to labour successfully.

'I sha'n't go until you forgive me,' she insisted. 'It'll spoil everything for me if you don't, Airey.'

'There's nothing to forgive,' he rejoined gloomily, as he dropped into a chair by the little table and rested his elbow on the red-leather book. 'I don't want to sail under false pretences, that's all.' His tones were measured and still hard. Peggy felt herself in disgrace; she drifted back to the window and forlornly poured out another cup of tea.

The impulse had been on Airey to tell her everything, to abandon to her his great secret, to let her know the truth as Tommy Trent knew it, to make her understand, by bitter mockery of himself, what that truth had done to him. But at the last he had not power to conquer the old habit of secrecy, or to face the change that a disclosure must bring. He unlocked his safe indeed, but it was only to take out five ten-pound notes; her money was all in notes, she liked the crackle of them. That done, he shut the door with a swing, clanking the heavy bolts home with a vicious twist of the handle.

'It sounds as if it meant to keep whatever it gets, doesn't it?'

asked Peggy, with a laugh still rather nervous. She took the notes. 'Thanks, Airey. I love money.' She crackled the notes against her cheek.

Airey's laugh, almost hearty, certainly scornful, showed that he was recovering his temper. 'Your love displays itself in getting rid of the beloved object as quickly as possible,' he remarked.

'That's what it's for,' smiled Peggy, happy at the re-establishment of friendly relations.

Peggy paid two or three other visits that day. At Mrs. Bonfill's she found Glentorly and Constantine Blair. She was admitted, but nobody took much notice of her. They were deep in political talk: things were not going very well; the country was not relying on Lord Glentorly in quite the proper spirit. Clouds were on everybody's brow. Peggy departed, and betook herself to Lady Blixworth's. The atmosphere here too was heavy and lamentable. Audrey seemed resentful and forlorn, her aunt acid and sharp; disappointment brooded over the premises.

'How people worry!' Peggy reflected, as she got back into her hansom and told the man to drive to Trix Trevalle's; if not at Danes Inn, if not in the houses of the great, there at least in Trix's flat she ought to find gaiety and triumph. The fact that people worried was oppressing Peggy to-day. Alas, Trix Trevalle was with Lord Mervyn! Gathering this fact from a discreet servant, Peggy fled back into her hansom with the sense of having escaped a great peril. She had met Lord Mervyn at Mrs. Bonfill's.

Whither now? Why, to Tommy Trent's, of course. The hansom (which was piling up a very good fare) whisked her off to Tommy's chambers at the corner of a street looking over St. James's Square. She left the cab at the door and went in. Here, anyhow, she was in great hopes of escaping the atmosphere of worry.

Tommy was a prosperous man, enjoying a very good practice as a solicitor in the City; his business was of a high class and yet decidedly lucrative. Peggy liked his rooms with their quiet luxury and their hint of artistic taste carefully unemphasised. She threw herself into a large armchair and waited for Tommy to appear. There was a small room where he sometimes worked an hour or so after he came home in the evenings, and there she supposed him to be; it was shut off by an interior door from the

room where she sat, and opened on the passage by another which she had passed on her way in. The servant had told her that Mr. Trent was engaged for the moment, but would soon be free. Peggy hoped that it would turn out that he was free for the evening too; a little dinner would be restful, and she had no engagement that she considered it necessary to keep.

There was a murmur of voices through the door. Peggy recognised Tommy's; it sounded familiar and soothing as she read a paper to while away the time; the other voice was strange to her. Presently there was the noise of chairs being pushed back, as though the interview were coming to a close. Tommy spoke again in a louder voice.

'Mr. Newton doesn't want his name mentioned.'

'We should have liked the support of Mr. Airey Newton's name.'

'He won't hear of that, but he believes in his process thoroughly—'

'I wonder if I ought to be hearing this!' thought Peggy, amused and rather interested at stumbling on her friends, so to speak, in their business hours and their business affairs.

Tommy Trent's voice went on:—

'And will take a fifth share in the syndicate—5,000l.'

'Is he prepared to put that down immediately?' The question sounded sceptical.

'Oh, yes, twice as much; to-morrow, if necessary. But no mention of his name, please. That's all settled then? Well, good-bye, Mr. Ferguson. Glad the thing looks so good. Hope your wife's well. Good-bye.'

The passage door was opened and shut. Peggy heard Tommy come back from it, whistling in a soft and contented manner. The passage door opened again, and the servant's voice was audible.

'Miss Ryle there? I'll go in directly,' said Tommy.

The paper had fallen from Peggy's hands. Five thousand pounds! Twice as much to-morrow, if necessary! Airey Newton! No other Newton, but Airey, Airey! The stranger had actually said 'Airey!' Her thoughts flew back to her talk with Airey—and, further back, to how Tommy Trent had made him give a dinner. And on that account she had quarrelled with Tommy! Everything fitted in now. The puzzle that had bewildered her in Danes Inn that very afternoon was solved. Perceiving the solution with merciless clearness, Peggy Ryle felt that she must cry. It

was such hypocrisy, such meanness, nay, such treachery. 'I don't want to sail under false colours,' he had said, and used that seemingly honest speech and others like it to make his wretched secret more secure. Now the safe took its true place in the picture; a pretty bad place it was; she doubted not that the red book was in the unholy business too. And the bread-and-butter! Peggy must be pardoned her bitterness of spirit. To think of the unstinted gratitude, the tender sentiment, which she had lavished on that bread-and-butter! She had thought of it as of St. Martin's cloak or any other classical case of self-sacrificing charity. And—worse, if possible—she had eaten the dinner too, a dinner that came from a grudging hand. She had fled to Tommy Trent's to escape worry. Worse than worry was here. With rather more justification than young folks always possess, she felt herself in the presence of a tragedy; that there was any comedy about also was more likely to strike a looker-on from outside.

'Sorry to have kept you waiting, Peggy,' said Tommy cheerfully, coming in from the other room. 'I had a man on business, and Wilson didn't tell me you were here.'

Peggy rose to her feet; a tear trickled down her cheek.

'Hullo! What's the matter? Are you in trouble?'

'I overheard you through the door.'

'What?'

'Just at the end you raised your voice.'

'And you listened?' Tommy was rather reproachful, but it did not seem to strike him what had happened yet.

'I heard what you said about Airey Newton.'

Tommy gave a low whistle; a look of perplexity, not unmixed with amusement, spread over his face.

'The deuce you did!' he remarked slowly.

'That's what's the matter: that's why I'm nearly crying.'

'I don't see it in that light, but I'm sorry you heard. It's a secret that Airey——'

'A secret! Yes, I should think it was. Are you anything that I don't know of? I mean a burglar, or a swindler, or anything of that kind?'

'You do know that I'm a solicitor?' Tommy wanted to relieve the strain of the conversation.

'I meant to stay with you, and perhaps to take you out to dinner——'

'Well, why won't you? I haven't done anything—except forget that it's not wise to talk too loudly about my clients' business.'

'I'm just going to Danes Inn to see Airey Newton.'

'Oh!' Tommy nodded gravely. 'You think of doing that?'

'It's what I'm going to do directly. I've a hansom at the door.'

'I'm sure you've a hansom at the door,' agreed Tommy. 'Sit down one minute, please,' he added. 'I want you to do something for me.'

'Be quick then,' commanded Peggy, sitting down, but obviously under protest. 'And you have done something too,' she went on. 'You've connived at it. You've backed him up. You've helped to deceive us all. You've listened to me while I praised him. You've praised him yourself.'

'I told you he could afford to give the dinner.'

'Yes—as he told me to-day that he wasn't a pauper! He made me think I'd hurt his feelings. I felt wretched. I begged him to forgive me. Oh, but it's not that! Tommy, it's the wretched meanness of it all! He was just one of the six or seven people in the world; and now——!'

Tommy was smoking, and had fallen into meditative silence.

He did not lack understanding of her feelings—anything she felt was always vivid to him—and on his own account he was no stranger to the thoughts that Airey Newton's propensity bred.

'How much money has he got?' she asked abruptly.

'I mustn't tell you.'

'More than what you said to that man?'

'Yes, more.'

'A lot more?'

Tommy spread out his hands and shrugged his shoulders. She knew all that mattered; it was merely etiquette that forbade an exact statement of figures; the essential harm was done.

'Well, you said you wanted something of me, Tommy.'

'I do. I want your word of honour that you'll never let Airey Newton know that you've found out anything about this.' He put his cigarette back into his mouth and smiled amicably at Peggy.

'I'm going straight to him to tell him I know it all. After that I sha'n't go any more.'

'Peggy, he's very fond of you. He'll hate your knowing more than anybody else's in the world almost.'

'I shall tell him you're not to blame, of course.'

'I wasn't thinking of that. He's been very kind to you. There was always bread-and-butter!'

This particular appeal miscarried; a subtlety of resentment centred on the bread-and-butter.

'I hate to think of it,' said Peggy brusquely. 'Do you really mean I'm to say nothing?'

'I mean much more. You're still to be his friend, still to go and see him, still to eat bread-and-butter. And, Peggy, you're still to love him—to love him as I do.'

Peggy looked across at him, and looked with new eyes. He had been the dear friend of many sunny hours; but now he wore a look and spoke in tones that the sunny hours had not called forth.

'I stand by him, whatever happens, and I want you to stand by him too.'

'If it came to the point, you'd stand by him and let me go?' she asked with a sudden quick understanding of his meaning.

'Yes,' said Tommy simply. He did not tell her there would be any sacrifice in what she suggested.

'I don't believe I can do it,' moaned Peggy.

'Yes, you can. Be just the same to him, only—only rather nicer, you know. There's only one chance for him, you see.'

'Is there any chance?' she asked dolefully. Her eyes met his. 'Yes, perhaps I know what you mean,' said she.

They were silent a moment. Then he came over to her and took her hand. 'Word of honour, Peggy,' he said, 'to let neither Airey himself nor any of the rest know? You must connive, as I did.'

She turned her eyes up to his in their clouded brightness. 'I promise, word of honour, Tommy,' said she.

He nodded in a friendly way and strolled off to the writing-table. She wandered to the window and looked out on the spacious, solid, old square. The summer evening was bright and clear, but Peggy was sad that there were things in the world hard to endure. Yet there were other things too; down in her heart was a deep joy because to-day, although she had lost a dear illusion, she had found a new treasure-house.

'I'm thinking some things about you, Tommy, you know,' she

said without turning round. There was a little catch in her voice.

'That's all right. Just let me write a letter, and we'll go and dine.'

She stood still till he rose and turned to see her head outlined against the window. For a moment he regarded it in silence, thinking of the grace she carried with her, how she seemed unable to live with meanness, and how for love's sake she would face it now, and, if it might be, heal it by being one of those who loved. He came softly behind her, but she turned to meet him.

'I suppose we must all cry sometimes, Tommy. Do say it makes the joy better!'

'They always tell you that!' He laughed gently.

'I came here to laugh with you, but now——'

'Laughter's the second course to-day,' said Tommy Trent.

It came then. He saw it suddenly born in her eyes and marked its assault on the lines of her lips. She struggled conscientiously, thinking, no doubt, that it was a shame to laugh. Tommy waited eagerly for the victory of mirth, or even that it might, in a general rout, save its guns and ammunition, and be ready to come into action another day. He had his hope. Peggy's low rich laugh came, against her will, but not to be denied.

'At any rate I show him the better way! I drew another fifty pounds to-day. And he hates it—oh, he hates it, Tommy!'

He laughed too, saying, 'Let's go out and play.'

As they went downstairs she thrust her hand through his arm and kept patting him gently. Then she looked up, and swiftly down again, and laughed a little and patted him again.

'I've half a mind to sing,' said she.

The afternoon had been a bottle of the old mixture—laughter and tears.

(To be continued.)

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

BY ALEXANDER INNES SHAND.

AMONG the makers of the Empire none have had more brilliant records than the statesmen-soldiers who subjugated and held Hindustan, mastering yet conciliating the warlike races who from time immemorial had made the great peninsula a battle-ground. Never has the adaptive genius of the self-reliant Briton been exhibited to greater advantage or crowned by more conspicuous success. From the day when the young writer-adventurer, after hesitating for the first and last time in council, won the decisive battle of Plassey, armed hosts have been scattered by handfuls of disciplined natives, stiffened by English soldiers under English leading. Even highly-trained and organised hosts like the Khalsa of the Punjab have had to succumb to the steadfast resolution which invariably retrieved strategical blundering. The tale of the Mutiny, in which Chamberlain played a part so conspicuous, was a sufficient answer to those who taunted the Englishman with a decay of martial spirit. As one of the Sikh leaders remarked when, after waiting on events, he saw at last the turn of the tide, 'What can be done against a race who can master a population in revolt, with the army they had created and armed?'

We owe our ascendancy over turbulent spirits to the fact that our mission was civilisation and our policy civilisation. But under the silken glove was always the armed hand. Soldiers and politicians, generally picked out for their double capacity, were always interchanging rôles. The curse of the old Company's administration was stagnation, consequent on promotion by seniority. On the North-Western frontier a system of somewhat arbitrary selection gave their opportunities to the *élite* of aspiring spirits, and undoubtedly it saved India in the supreme crisis. During the peace in Europe between Waterloo and the Alma, the frontier provinces were the British Algeria. They were the school for soldiers, as they were the training college for administrators. As our frontiers were advanced to the Indus and beyond, we were brought into contact with the fiercest tribesmen in the world. Secure, as

they fancied, in their hill fastnesses, those mountaineers knew nothing of the arts of peace. They starved in bad seasons among struggling crops, and raided the plains at all times for booty. Fierce as they were, their methods of warfare were elusive. If intelligence failed, they were already in retreat when the smoke of burning villages gave the alarm to our posts. The problem was to check those 'infalls' and to bridle them. To that unsettled frontier tended the aspirations of all soldiers or civilians who were worth their salt. The Government was willing enough to devolve grave responsibilities on men who did not fear to accept them. Commanders or commissioners of districts must be diplomatists as well, for behind the hillmen was the Amir of Afghanistan, and on our flank the martial chiefs of the Seven Rivers, jealously suspicious of European encroachments. Such was the stage on which Neville Chamberlain was destined to play his part.

The future Field-Marshal was the third son of Sir Henry Orlando Chamberlain, then our Consul and *Chargé d'affaires* in the Brazils. Neville Bowles was born at Rio in January 1820, but he was educated in England. As a boy, like Clive, who climbed a steeple which had baffled the boldest village lads, or like John Jacob of Jacobabad, who delighted in riding unbroken colts, he is said to have shown the courage verging on recklessness which won him a foremost place among the fighting wardens of the Indian marches. He had one narrow escape, when he plunged into the half-frozen Avon to save an unfortunate sheep. Often in after years he risked his life to rescue a comrade from the swords of Pathan marauders or revolted sepoys.

He was sent to Woolwich with the idea of entering the Engineers or Artillery, but his tastes did not turn in the direction of the scientific corps, and he had little inclination for severe study. It was much to his liking when his educational career was cut short, and he was gazetted to the Bengal army, a cadet of seventeen. It was a stirring time, nor did he rust in cantonments. The disasters and humiliation of the first Afghan war had gravely imperilled British prestige. Pollock, delayed by belated reinforcements and deficiency of transport, was pressing the preparations for forcing the Khyber. Sale was gallantly flying the flag at Jellalabad, having restored the earthworks that had been levelled by the earthquake, but he was menaced by hordes of Afghans, gaining audacity each day that the relief was deferred. Above all, the unflinching resolution of Nott had held obstinately

to Kandahar. He had helped Keane, who had been sent to help him out of his difficulties in the Bolan. With Rawlinson at his elbow, by shrewd diplomacy and venturesome sorties he was keeping at bay the hordes of tribesmen who beset a city seething with fanaticism and by no means very defensible. With high soldierly spirit he had disregarded the orders to retire, and was awaiting intelligence of Pollock's advance to force his way to their meeting at the Bala Hissar of Cabul.

It was in these circumstances that the young cadet was sent to the front, and he joined when Nott was operating in Beluchistan. The war, which was fast using up the few European officers, gave him his opportunity. Irregular corps of horse and foot were being raised on the borders, and he was at once transferred to the command of a squadron in one of the new bodies of native cavalry. Nor had he to wait long for the chances of distinguishing himself. In March 1842 Kandahar was in imminent danger. On the 25th a brigade was sent out under Colonel Wymer, to clear the western environs from the Dourance horse, and to guard the camels driven out to graze, for the garrison was straitened for forage. The Dourances charged gallantly on Wymer's squares; and Nott, when he heard the sound of the guns, moved out to the aid of the brigade. When he reached the crest of a commanding ridge and looked down on the valley, he saw his infantry in a hollow square, enclosing the camels, and facing dense masses of the enemy, kept at bay by the Horse Artillery. Captain Neill wrote, in an account of the action:

Just as General Nott came in sight, Lieutenant Chamberlain of the Bengal service, an officer in the Shah's cavalry, who at the head of a small party had charged, was driven back, and, emerging from a cloud of dust, formed in rear of the infantry, himself and many of his party wounded—but not without having given very satisfactory proof of his power as a swordsman, albeit his treacherous weapon had broken in his hand.

That reputation as a superb swordsman went on increasing, till at Guzerat his feats in single combat, in the battle and the chase, were bruited aloud among Sikhs and British. Of splendid physique, extraordinarily active, with a cool head and a flexible wrist, Chamberlain was the Augereau of the English army. Perhaps we can hardly say he was unlucky, for few men threw themselves more recklessly into the thickest of the *mêlées* when the half-disciplined horsemen of the auxiliaries met the wilder horsemen of the hills. But few soldiers have been more frequently wounded; he had been

six times hurt, and once very dangerously, before Nott marched into Cabul, and the shot that shattered his arm at Delhi invalidated him through the most eventful episodes of the siege. Though indeed, with the high courage that hurried him away in the ardour of battle, had he headed the stormers with Nicholson he would probably have shared the fate of his friend.

For it was at Ghazni that Chamberlain made Nicholson's acquaintance. They were almost contemporaries, though Chamberlain was the senior by a couple of years. There must have been something magnetic in Nicholson's personality which impressed itself on all who met him, and all the more, perhaps, that he was silent and self-controlled, with an expression that at first sight was almost sinister. Even as a youth his appearance struck Chamberlain, who has described it in manuscript notes. 'He was a tall, strong, slender youth, with regular features and a quiet, reserved manner. We became friends at first sight, as is common with youth, and we were constantly together during the short time that intervened between his regiment taking over the fort and my regiment leaving for Kandahar. After my arrival at that place, occasional correspondence passed between us, but neither was given to letter-writing, and what most occupied our minds was the events taking place in our respective neighbourhoods, for there were already signs that our occupation of the country was resented by the people.' Before they met again both had gone through exciting experiences. Chamberlain's services and wounds gained him honourable mention in despatches, but Nicholson had been brought face to face with a fate far worse than death. At Ghazni his regiment had relieved the 16th Native Infantry, in which Chamberlain was serving. The 16th withdrew to Kandahar. Nicholson remained with Colonel Palmer, who was holding his isolated fortress. Palmer was in worse case than either the commandant of Khelat-i-Ghilzei or Nott at Kandahar. The place was strong, there were sufficient stores of food, but his sepoys had been shrivelled up by the intense cold, and he was compelled to surrender through want of water. Latterly the garrison had only drawn their supplies by such desperate sorties as that of David's valiant men when they brought him to drink from the well of Bethlehem. Nicholson was one of the unfortunate captives who were hurried away beyond the northern mountains towards Turkestan when Pollock and Nott were advancing on Cabul. Fortunately George Lawrence, who had been given over as a

hostage, was of the party. With his knowledge of Oriental ways, he bribed the leader of the escort to linger, and the relief was extreme when Sir Richmond Shakspeare galloped up at the head of a troop of British horsemen. The released prisoners were escorted to Nott's camp below the walls of Cabul. Next day Chamberlain, strolling past a tent surrounded by loungers in Afghan dress, was struck by a stone. Indignant at the unprovoked assault, he drew his sword when he saw the man stooping to pick up another. What might have been a mortal combat ended in a hearty laugh, for the Afghan was no other than John Nicholson.

The friends were constantly in company while our forces occupied Cabul. Then came the evacuation, when the long, straggling column threaded the fatal defiles of the Koord Cabul, still strewn with the skeletons of Elphinstone's army, to be welcomed on their arrival in Peshawur with salvoes of artillery. The tribesmen gave little trouble on the march, but Neville Chamberlain had his usual ill-luck, and was severely wounded in repelling an attack. Again he had honourable mention in despatches; henceforth there was a favourable mark against his name, and he was immediately gratified by an appointment to the Governor-General's bodyguard. His excellent record, his fascinating manners, and his evident ability made him good friends in high places; his advancement was rapid and his occupations were various. If he ever joined the bodyguard, he was not long detained on duty for ceremonial parades. In 1843 he was Deputy Quartermaster-General, a coveted staff appointment which Lord Roberts has described as more than realising his highest early ambitions. And although India was then generally in enjoyment of peace, it brought Chamberlain again into the field in one of our little wars. There was trouble in Gwalior. The Rajah had died, his successor was a minor, and affairs were being administered by the Maharanee, an intriguing woman. In fact, the circumstances were very much the same as those which subsequently led to the annexation of the Punjaub. The British Government interfered and appointed a Regent, but the Regent was expelled by a popular revolt, and the administration fell into the hands of a court favourite. Then the Governor-General issued a proclamation of intolerable length, and, what was more to the purpose, he personally accompanied an army across the frontier. It was commanded by Sir Hugh Gough, and had to face 22,000 veterans, disciplined by Europeans. Chamberlain

was present at a bloody engagement, in which masses of the Mahratta cavalry, charging home with their usual courage, recoiled before the British guns and were riddled by the British musketry. And, as always, the Quartermaster-General was to the front, riding with the troopers who sabred the fugitives. Sir Hugh Gough's strategy at Chilianwallah was deplorable, but in Gwalior, as at Guzerat, he made good use of his guns, and the Governor-General congratulated him on 'the able combinations' by which at Maharajpore and Punier on the same day he won the double victory which was followed by unconditional submission.

After acting as military secretary to the Governor of Bombay, Chamberlain was appointed one of the aides-de-camp to Lord Dalhousie, and about the same time he returned to active service as Commandant of the 8th Irregular Cavalry, attached to the army of the Punjab. Those were anxious times on the north-western frontier. After the first Sikh war, Henry Lawrence, a simple captain of artillery, was virtually Regent of the Punjab, but he was helped by the same men who held Sikhs and Pathans to their allegiance through the darkest days of the Mutiny. Chief among his assistants were his brother George; Edwardes, who as a lieutenant routed two armies of overwhelming strength, and recovered Mooltan from the traitor Moolraj; Lake, who served loyally under him there; Lumsden—of the Guides—and Reynell Taylor, Abbot and Richard Pollock, Chamberlain and Nicholson. Then there were neither telegraphs nor railways. Cut off from quick communication with headquarters, there were no rules of red tape, and chivalrous rivals, ever eager to assist each other, shrank from no responsibility. They all foresaw that serious trouble was brewing. In the summer of 1848, Chatar Singh, a veteran intriguer but a gallant warrior, raised the standard of rebellion. In a characteristic proclamation he burned his boats, devoting his head to the gods and his arms to the Khalsa. In September his son, Sher Singh, our professed ally, suddenly withdrew his forces from before Mooltan. The isolated wardens of the marches showed themselves equal to the occasion: Abbot, who has left his memorial in the city of Abbotabad, withdrew before Chatar into the Hazara hills, rightly trusting to the loyalty of the mountaineers, who had been won by his firm and beneficent rule. Reynell Taylor was in Bannu, where he was as much beloved and admired. Herbert had been driven to shut himself

up in Attock, which was threatened by Dost Mahommed and his Afghans co-operating with Chatar and his Sikhs. And Nicholson, who was already being worshipped as a deity, had ridden south from Rawul Pindi with a body of his Pathans to place himself at the disposal of Lord Gough.

After seven weeks of stubborn resistance, Herbert's garrison mutinied and Attock surrendered. The fall of the fortress set Chatar free, and, handing it over to his Afghan allies, he marched to join his forces with those of Sher Singh. Lord Gough neglected the favourable chance of dealing with his enemies before they united, and blundered into the bloody battle of Chilianwallah. Hodson expressed the mind of the Army when he wrote: 'The Sikhs, though beaten, have had every advantage given away to them. . . . The mismanagement has been disgraceful, yet it will be called a victory.' It would have been not only a defeat but a disaster, had not Hardinge been preparing for war, and distributing forces within easy call of the Sutlej. Chamberlain's irregulars had been summoned with other regiments, and at Guzerat, which more than retrieved the errors of Chilianwallah, he gained fresh laurels, and greatly added to his reputation as a paladin of romance. After Chilianwallah, Sher Singh, though no very skilful captain, had remarked to George Lawrence, who was then his prisoner, that it was extraordinary that Gough had made so little use of his magnificent artillery, which was far more of a terror to the Sikh than even the British bayonet. No such mistake was made at Guzerat. 'The cannonade,' wrote Gough, 'was the most magnificent I ever witnessed, and was terrible in its effect. The Sikh guns were silenced, when the gunners had fallen almost to a man; the villages flanking their left were stormed, the long lines of British horse, foot, and guns swept forward to complete the discomfiture of a beaten foe.'

As usual with Orientals, the Sikh infantry threw off the war dress, and scattered through the fields in guise of peasants. But the horsemen were of sterner stuff; they were proud of their skill with the weapons they had wielded from boyhood. Golab Singh, for example, the commander-in-chief in the former war, though he had the best brain in the Punjaub, had partly owed the ascendancy which had raised a trooper to supreme command to the fact that as a youth of fifteen he had in a single skirmish put seven of his enemies *hors de combat*. The flying Sikh horsemen turned when hard pressed, and there was a succession of

combats man to man. Among the leaders of the irregulars following the chase were such dare-devils as Lumsden of the Guides, and Hodson; yet Nicholson and Neville Chamberlain seem to have carried off the honours. As to the latter, his brigadier wrote that he could not praise him too much 'for the example he set in several hand-to-hand affairs with a furious and exasperated enemy during the pursuit.' As another officer wrote at the time: 'His fame as a swordsman and leader of irregular horse was already the theme of admiration and envy among all the bolder spirits in the camp.'

After the battle, the order was to keep the enemy on the run. Lord Dalhousie, anticipating the victory, had already directed the formation of a flying column under Sir Walter Gilbert. Throwing off detachments to right and left, guns were taken and bands of the enemy brought to surrender, for the disheartened fugitives, as one of them said, had been fighting for weeks on cabbages and carrots, and generous terms were offered to the rank and file. At last the bulk of the beaten army gave in on the plains of Rawul Pindi, and regiment after regiment laid down their arms at the feet of 'the flying British general.' The Sikhs acknowledged that the game was up, and, having fought manfully to the last, they manfully submitted to the inevitable. But Gilbert had yet to deal with the Afghans, who were in possession of Peshawur and Attock. At Attock his advance guard sighted the Indus just as the Afghans were setting fire to the boat-bridge. Chamberlain was leading: his horses were fagged, but without loss of a moment he charged down on the river and saved the bridge from utter destruction. Next day it was repaired, and the column, passing over, reached Peshawur by forced marches in three days instead of five. The Afghans did not await its arrival, but were moving off still faster for the Khyber.

The Punjaub was annexed; a central Board was constituted at Lahore, with Henry Lawrence at the head, and his brother John in charge of the finances. The provinces were administered by an admixture of soldiers and civilians—men who for the most part knew the people, and were prompt to deal with any emergency. But now that the Sikh army was disbanded and their frontier garrisons had been withdrawn, it became necessary to provide for external defence. The important towns of the interior were entrusted to European troops. But now the fortified bulwarks of the old North-Western Provinces were to be pushed forwards to

the Indus and Peshawur, so the establishment of order beyond the Sutlej became indispensable to the security of India.

Hitherto the irregular regiments, told off for the frontiers, had been subject only to the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, which involved delays and correspondence when they were wanted for active service. Now it was decided to organise a separate force for the special guard of the territories between the Indus and the hills, the debatable land between Hindustan and Afghanistan. That was the origin of 'The Punjaub Frontier Force,' organised on the methods of the irregulars of India. The frontier on either side was peopled by wild warriors, and the plains were being constantly raided from the hills. The charge of the new military police was to repress raiding and rapine. Distributed along the borders at commanding posts, they were to be ready to ride or march at a moment's notice, and were to be at the call of the civil officers without reference to the military authorities. In fact, the civil administration was invested with military power.

No sooner was the scheme of government made public than there was a rush of applicants for regimental appointments. It was an enticing school for aspiring soldiers, and offered endless opportunities for distinction. The most promising officers were chosen for regimental duty, and the best soldiers on the frontiers were selected for command. The recruiting of privates went on briskly : all were taken from the most warlike of the tribes. It was a bold conception, but not a novel one, for Lumsden had already made the experiment when he raised his Guides a few years before. With him it was really a hazardous venture, for he trusted life and reputation to robbers by profession. No doubt his personality imposed on them, but he had found his bloodthirsty Pathans absolutely trustworthy, even when they guided him into the fastnesses of their own kinsmen. Then their very vices and crimes became military virtues, for blood feuds between the nearest relatives had been common, and parricide and fratricide were familiar incidents. Perhaps the strangest circumstance in the formation of these corps was that disbanded Sikhs were mingled with the mountaineers with whom they had been always at deadly enmity, for the mere fact that British garrisons had replaced the Sikhs facilitated amicable relations with the robbers of the hills. The native officers were chosen for merit : all were men of some means and good social position, and promotion was not to go by seniority. Consequently, as Sir Richard Temple wrote,

'the force soon became perhaps the finest body of native troops ever arrayed under British banners in India, being specially excellent in its cavalry and infantry.' Those fierce and active spirits found constant employment. Sir Richard goes on: 'Their mettle and prowess were frequently tried in expeditions against the warlike offenders on the border: their endurance was tested by watch and ward in scattered outposts at the foot of the hills. They held the borders for 500 miles from Hazara on the Upper Indus down to Scinde.' Nor is it surprising that they did their work efficiently, for their leaders were Lumsden, Chamberlain, and Nicholson, John Coke and Henry Daly.

The friendship of Chamberlain and Nicholson had hitherto been close and uninterrupted. When Nicholson returned, in 1852, from leave in Europe, it was to Chamberlain he vented his indignation over the iniquities of Bourbon misrule in Naples; had he been a free-lance at home he would certainly have volunteered with Garibaldi. In action on the frontier they had been in full accord. But two unhappy incidents occurred, and for a time the old friends were at daggers drawn. In the winter of 1854 the command of the frontier force was vacated. Nicholson at once applied for it, and there could be no question as to his qualifications. As it chanced, Chamberlain had then gone on leave to the Cape. Landing at Calcutta, Lord Dalhousie had given him the coveted appointment, and, on learning that, Nicholson withdrew his application and wrote to his friend, acknowledging his superior claims and congratulating him in the handsomest terms. Unfortunately the letter miscarried, and Nicholson, receiving no reply, bitterly resented the fancied slight. With all his virtues he was revengeful, and his nature was to brood over wrongs. Moreover, just then one of his most trusty henchmen was assassinated near one of Chamberlain's posts. Rightly or wrongly, he imagined that the garrison had been slow to succour the man, and in his irritable mood wrote officially to the Chief Commissioner, complaining of the slackness of the troops under Chamberlain. Chamberlain, hot-tempered as himself, resented the imputation on his subordinates and troopers. John Lawrence was bombarded by bitter letters from both sides, and never did he show to greater advantage than in his patient efforts at mediation. He told Chamberlain of the kindly spirit in which Nicholson had welcomed his appointment; he wrote to Nicholson saying that Chamberlain threatened to resign unless the *amende* was made, adding that,

though he thought the Commandant unreasonable, his resignation would be a public loss. He begged Nicholson to express regret for a misunderstanding; but Nicholson was obdurate. Some months elapsed, and Chamberlain was mollified. Lawrence quoted to Nicholson from a letter of his: 'I shall be happy to receive him with the same feeling of respect and admiration I have always borne towards him. He has only to come within reach of me for me to extend both hands towards him; and in so doing I shall be doubly glad, for I shall know that the Government of which we are the common servants will be the gainer.' That last sentence was more pregnant with significance than he suspected at the time. It was well for India that they were reconciled before the great outbreak. Thoroughly reconciled they were. Lawrence backed up the quotation by saying: 'Two such soldiers ought not to be in a state of antagonism. Chamberlain is a fine fellow, and it is much to be regretted that we have not more men of his stamp. His good qualities far outshine his faults. I pray you to consider what I say, for I pray you to consider that you have not a better friend or a more sincere advocate than myself.' That last appeal was effectual. The men met, and Nicholson learned to his horror that he had been brooding over an imaginary wrong. The revulsion of penitence made him unwontedly effusive; we are told that his face was crimsoned and his voice was choked. Thenceforth the bonds between them were tightened, till Nicholson died almost in Chamberlain's arms.

The Frontier Force, exercised in frequent expeditions, was in a state of perfect efficiency in 1857. The evil news from Barrackpore were followed by the tidings that the great garrison of Meerut had mutinied, and that the Sepoys had marched to the capital of the Moguls. Edwardes was then Commissioner at Peshawur, and Nicholson his deputy. Then Edwardes's far-sighted statecraft was triumphantly vindicated. It was he who had forced forward the treaty with Dost Mahommed, contrary to the judgment of John Lawrence; and now if the Dost stood fast to his engagements—as he did—we had nothing to fear in our rear from Afghanistan. As it was, the situation was perilous enough, for already letters and mysterious messages were flying through the country; and when rumours were authenticated by reliable details, all eyes in the north-west were turned towards Delhi. On May 11 Edwardes had the telegram which told him of the outbreak at Meerut. One of his first steps was to send a message

to Chamberlain, who immediately rode over from Kohat. Next day there was a Council. Those present were Edwardes, Nicholson, Chamberlain, with General Reed commanding the division, and the Brigadier, Sydney Cotton. A young man was summoned to record the decisions—his name was Roberts. Thenceforward we have Lord Roberts's graphic narrative. There were 15,000 British soldiers to hold the Punjaub against more than thrice the number of disciplined sepoys. Edwardes and Nicholson were agreed that the only chance was to trust the chiefs and the people. To reassure them, decision and a prompt display of strength were imperative. The members of the Council were to communicate with their native friends on the frontier. Reed was to join the Chief Commissioner at Rawul Pindi. Cotton was to command at Peshawur, and a flying column of reliable troops was to be organised. Everything depended on the action of the column. 'It was no ordinary command; . . . it was felt that the best man should be selected, irrespective of seniority.' All agreed in pitching upon Chamberlain. But so important a choice must be ratified from headquarters, and a message was transmitted through the Chief Commissioner to the Commander-in-Chief. The answer from General Anson came promptly, nominating Chamberlain, and Roberts, to his intense delight, was selected as Chamberlain's staff officer. Next day Reed and Chamberlain set off for Rawul Pindi to consult with Lawrence as to the formation of the column.

At Peshawur there was a painful scene when the commanders of sepoy regiments were summoned to the Residency to be informed that their regiments were to be disarmed. To a man they protested violently, pledging themselves for the loyalty of their men. The Brigadier silenced the vehement remonstrances by saying, 'Gentlemen, no more discussion. These are my orders, and I must have them obeyed.' Within an hour the troops were paraded, and, as Edwardes wrote, it was an affecting thing to see them putting their firelocks into the artillery waggons—weapons they had used honourably for years. The officers of a cavalry regiment threw in their own swords with those of their men, and even tore off their spurs. He adds, 'The result was instantaneous; the air was cleared as if by a thunderstorm. We breathed freely again. On our return from the disarming parade, hundreds of khans who stood aloof the day before, appeared as thick as flies, and were profuse of offers of service.'

Chamberlain, attended by Roberts, rattled along rough roads by mail cart to meet the column mustering at Wazirabad. They narrowly escaped an ugly accident. The Brigadier remarked that a rein had got unbuckled, and warned his companions to look out for a spill. The driver lost his head: there was a crash and an upset; but fortunately they picked themselves up little the worse, and 'in a few minutes we were rushing along as before.' They found the column had arrived. Roberts was sent to announce to the senior officer that Brigadier Chamberlain had come to take over the command. The messenger met with an unceremonious reception. Colonel Campbell never moved from the bed on which he was reposing, but dryly remarked that, as superior in rank, he declined to acknowledge Chamberlain as his senior. Nothing was absolutely pressing, and Chamberlain showed his moderation by referring the matter to the supreme authorities, leaving Campbell in charge of the column. Before it reached Lahore the difficulty had been settled, and Campbell had loyally accepted an adverse decision. It had been believed that the men were all dependable, but soon the native troops showed signs of disaffection. At night, one of his spies awakened Roberts to tell him that the 35th Native Infantry were to mutiny at daybreak, and in fact some of the men were seen loading their muskets. Chamberlain was roused, and sent Roberts to the European officers, telling them what he had heard. He followed fast on the message; the men were paraded and their muskets examined. Two were found loaded, and the two sepoys were marched off to the police station. As Lord Roberts writes, 'Chamberlain determined to lose no time in dealing with the case, and although drum-head courts-martial were then supposed to be obsolete, he decided to revive that very useful means of disposing, in time of war, of serious cases of crime.' The men were tried by a court of native officers, convicted, sentenced, and blown from guns. The form of execution emanated from Chamberlain, who considered it was a time for striking terror. Perhaps it was significant of the grave dangers he confronted that the culprits met their fate with heroic equanimity and that their comrades 'looked more crestfallen than shocked or horrified.'

Scarcely had the column moved on to Amritsar than Chamberlain was surprised by a telegram offering him the Adjutant-Generalship of the army, vacated by the death of Colonel Chester. Delighted by the call to Delhi, he did not hesitate for a moment, and the

soldiers he left would have been more grieved to lose him had he not been replaced by Nicholson. And Nicholson in that perilous crisis gave proof of his profound knowledge of Orientals. The Rajah of Kapurthala was our fast friend, but the generals commanding his levies were far less sympathetic. Lake, the political agent at Jullundur, welcomed the arrival of the column. As it only halted in passing, he asked the Kapurthala chiefs to meet Nicholson at his house. Lord Roberts describes what followed: 'At the close of the ceremony General Mehtab Sing, a near relation of the Rajah, took his leave and was walking out of the room, when I observed Nicholson stalk to the door, put himself in front of Mehtab Sing, and, waving him back with an authoritative air, prevent him from leaving the room. . . . Nicholson said to Lake, "Do you see that General Mehtab Sing has his shoes on?" Lake replied "that he had noticed the fact, but tried to excuse it." Nicholson, speaking in Hindustani, declared that there was no possible excuse for such a gross piece of impertinence. It was a deliberate breach of etiquette, because the offender thought we were in no position to resent it. The General was compelled to take off his shoes, and leave the room, carrying them in his hands. The effect upon the Kapurthala people was immediate; their manners changed, and the swaggerers became submissive.' Several years afterwards, when Roberts met the Rajah, the Prince laughed with him over the story, and said that Mehtab Sing richly deserved the treatment he received.

Chamberlain left for Delhi on May 13, and Roberts followed, when all artillery officers unattached were summoned to the siege. His first visit was to Chamberlain, who intended again to have him on his staff. But while the appointment was in suspense Donald Stewart appeared, worn and half-starved, from a most adventurous ride, and his claims as the senior were recognised. Roberts was by no means sorry to return to the Quartermaster-General's department; but as he says, 'Had Chamberlain's wish been carried out, my position might have been quite changed.' Neither Anson nor Barnard, successively in command, and who both fell victims to the climate, was familiar with Indian affairs, and Chamberlain's counsels were constantly in demand. Lawrence, who was chivalrously denuding the Punjaub of all available troops, felt that the strain was daily increasing. Nothing could relieve it but the capture of Delhi, and that he was urging with natural impatience. The generals on the spot

were better informed as to the difficulties, and though the hospitals were filling, Chamberlain agreed that precipitate action might be disastrous. Though cholera and dysentery were spreading in the camp, there was nothing for it but to wait for reinforcements. Meantime the mutineers made continual sorties, and the besiegers were kept on the alert. On July 14 there was a sortie in unusual force. Under a heavy fire of artillery the rebels drove in the pickets, establishing themselves among enclosures in dangerous proximity to the Ridge. General Reed, who in his turn had succeeded Anson, mustered all available men, and a column, under Brigadier Showers, was launched against the assailants. Chamberlain accompanied it; the troops, moving forward under a murderous fire, wavered before a wall lined with the enemy. Then Chamberlain, shouting over his shoulder to the men to follow, spurred his horse at the wall. Follow him they did, but as he landed on the further side a ball shattered his shoulder, and thenceforward he was crippled through the siege.

Communications were closed to the east and south—no tidings had come of the Cawnpore massacre or the defence of Lucknow. Hopes had been raised, only to be disappointed, of the imminent arrival of Havelock's force. Daly had brought in the Guides, looking fresh after their toilsome marches, as if formed up for parade. Now, on August 8, Hodson wrote from camp, 'Nicholson has come on ahead, and is a host in himself, if he does not go and get knocked over as Chamberlain did. The camp is all alive at the notion of something decisive taking place soon.' Nicholson was followed a day or two afterwards by his column. His fame had preceded him. His last achievement had been a rout of mutineers near Nujjafgurt, as to which Daly of the Guides said 'that not another man in camp, except perhaps Chamberlain, could have taken that column to Nujjafgurt. They went through a perfect morass, Nicholson leading as if nothing was the matter,' when the water was actually washing his saddle-bow. The presence and personality of the stalwart soldier wrought an immediate change. An officer tells how a stranger of striking appearance was seen visiting all the pickets, examining everything and making searching inquiries. 'He was a man cast in a giant mould, with massive chest and powerful limbs, . . . features of stern beauty, and deep, sonorous voice. There was something of immense strength, talent, and resolution in his whole frame and

manner, and a power of ruling men on high occasions which no one could escape noticing.' With the arrival of his column circumstances changed. No further reinforcements were to be expected. Hitherto the besiegers had been actually the besieged—it was all they could do to make good the ridge. But now if Delhi was to be stormed it must be stormed at once, and the appeals were more urgent from the denuded Punjaub. Nevertheless Wilson, the fourth of the commanders—Reed had only been in command for a fortnight—was still hesitating. Nicholson, who was in daily consultation with Chamberlain, lost all patience. One morning, when a council of war was to assemble, he told Roberts that if the commander still refused to attack, he intended to propose his suspension. Chamberlain was *hors de combat*; though next in seniority he could not accept the command himself, but would have it passed on to Colonel Campbell. Fortunately there was no need for that audacious step. Wilson had been stiffened by Baird Smith, the chief of the Engineers, and Smith was strongly backed up by Nicholson, Chamberlain, Daly, and Norman. But Roberts adds that he has not a doubt that Nicholson would have spoken as he said had the decision been different, and he is persuaded that 'his masterful spirit would have effected its purpose and borne down all opposition.'

The attack was delivered in three columns. When the gates were forced, the defence was obstinate; guns opened transverse fire from ramparts and bastions, and the houses were so many loopholed fortresses. The progress was slow and checks were frequent. News came that Nicholson had fallen, heading the 7th Fusiliers in a rush down a narrow lane. Wilson's heart failed him again; he thought of withdrawing and falling back on the Ridge. Chamberlain had been carried out on his litter to a house where he could overlook and direct our right attack. That day he received two urgent messages from Wilson. He was sitting with Daly and a native officer of the Guides, all three incapacitated by severe wounds. The first message begged him to send back a Baluch battalion which had been given him, and expressed the hope that 'we shall be able to hold what we have got.' The second, written later in the afternoon, seemed to invite an opinion as to withdrawing. The answer was unhesitating, 'He insisted on the necessity of holding on to the last.' As to Nicholson, when a rumour of retiring reached him, he characteristically thanked

God that he had still strength enough to shoot the general. Fortunately, Baird Smith, though he should really have been in hospital, still kept close to the wavering general, and all idea of retreat was given up.

Delhi was captured, and Chamberlain, wounded and worn as he was, was indefatigable in his attentions to his dying friend. The victory was saddened by heavy losses, but none cast a deeper gloom over the camp than the fate of Nicholson. It was felt, in the words of Lord Dalhousie, that a tower of strength had fallen. When Edwardes at Peshawur had a telegram saying merely that Delhi was assaulted and fighting going on, he wrote to his wife, 'We rejoice with trembling; . . . who knows how many of our brave soldiers have fallen? Who knows if John Nicholson is safe?' His suspense was short. On the 15th he heard that Nicholson was wounded, and on the 23rd Chamberlain telegraphed, 'Poor John Nicholson is worse, and there is little or no hope now. . . . Send me any message you may wish to give him.' The answer was, 'Give John Nicholson our love in time and eternity, and read him Acts xvi. 31 and Rom. x. 9. God ever bless him.' Next day brought the announcement of the end. Chamberlain was evidently overcome by grief. He added, 'I don't write to-day; I will try to do so to-morrow.' That private message was accompanied by an official telegram from the Adjutant-General to the Commissioner. 'Brigadier-General Nicholson expired, at half-past ten o'clock A.M., of the wound received on the morning of the assault. In him the Bengal army has deeply to deplore the loss of one of its noblest and bravest soldiers.—Neville Chamberlain.'

A long letter, written a few days later, is an affectionate tribute to the noble qualities of the friend who had been in some sense a rival, and for a time an enemy. After dwelling on Nicholson's deeds in the storm, and the commanding influence he had exercised on the operations, there are interesting personal details, doing equal honour to both men.

When he first arrived, I was on my back and unable to move, and only commenced to sit up in bed on the siege train arriving. Under these circumstances I was, of course, only able to associate with him when he was at leisure; but out of kindness to my condition he never failed to pass a portion of the day with me, and frequently, though I would beg of him to go and take a canter, he would refuse and lose the evening air.

My recovery, after being able to sit up, was rapid, and by the time our first battery opened I was able to go in a doolie to the ridge and watch the practice.

He would frequently insist upon escorting me, and no woman could have shown greater consideration, finding out good places from which to obtain the best view, and going ahead to see that I did not incur undue risks.

On the 13th we sat talking together for some time, and I begged him to stay and dine, but he said he could not. We did not meet again till the evening of the 14th, when he, poor fellow, was lying stretched on a charpoy, breathing with difficulty and only able to jerk out his words in syllables. Oh, my dear Edwardes, never can I forget this meeting; but, painful as it would have been to you, I wish you could have been there, for next to his mother his thoughts turned towards you. . . . Before quitting him I wrote, at his dictation, the following message for you: 'Tell him I should have been a better man if I had continued to live with him,' &c.

What purer gratification could there be in this world than to receive such words from a dying man?

The crisis was past, and the Government turned its attention to the reorganisation of the army. The Commissioner of the Punjaub was asked for his views, and the men he selected to consult with were Chamberlain and Edwardes. For his services in the Mutiny Chamberlain had been made a C.B. and aide-de-camp to the Queen, and a year or two afterwards he led an expedition against the Waziris, which forced the formidable Burara Pass and pacified the wild country behind. For that he was rewarded with the K.C.B. In 1863 there was worse trouble on the trans-Indus frontier. Afghan emissaries were stirring up the tribes; and it was feared we might again be at war with the Amir. A strong expeditionary force was mustered, to advance in two columns, one of them based on Peshawur, and the other on Hazara. The former, under command of Chamberlain, was to move through the Umbeyla Pass, and operate on the enemy's line of retreat. Chamberlain would not have risked himself there had he not been assured by the politicals that there would be no serious opposition. On the contrary, when committed to the mountain defiles, he found that the fanatical Akhund of Swat had been preaching a holy war, and that all the hillmen between the Indus and the Cabul river were gathering in front of him. Abandoning the offensive for the defensive, he had enough to do to hold his own. Entrenching himself behind the lines of a savage Torres Vedras, he hoped to starve out the beleaguers swarming around him. Meantime there were daily attacks on our posts, and the poetically named Eagle's Nest, the key of our positions, was twice taken and retaken. When it was recovered the second time, Chamberlain led in person over the narrow ridge and up the rugged defile. That final counter-stroke demoralised the enemy; but Chamber-

lain, with his habitual ill-fortune, was so severely hurt as to be invalided for the rest of the campaign. But the Government again expressed approval of his conduct by special promotion to the rank of Major-General.

It was the last occasion of his being under fire. Successively gazetted lieutenant-general, with the colonelcy of a Bengal regiment, and general, in 1875 he was Member of Council at Madras, and in the same year was given command of the Madras army. Thence, in the summer of 1878, he was called away to the familiar fighting ground as head of the special mission which Lord Lytton proposed to send to Cabul.

The story of the rejection of the olive branch is historical. Sher Ali, in an evil hour, took the advice of the Russian General Stolietoff, and declined to receive the British embassy. Chamberlain, suspecting that the answer from Cabul would be unsatisfactory, 'in order to reduce any insult to a minimum, sent forward Cavagnari with half a score of sowars to confer with the Afghan general. The momentous meeting which was to decide the question of war or peace was at a watermill on the stream near the fort of Ali Musjid, and, by a coincidence, it was near the identical spot where Chamberlain had been wounded before, when Nott was retiring. Against the Amir's decision the chief of the mission was helpless. Reporting the failure, he wrote to Lord Lytton, 'No man was ever more anxious than I to preserve peace and secure a friendly solution, and it was only when I plainly saw the Amir's fixed intention to drive us into a corner that I told you we must either sink into a position of obeying his behests on all points, or stand on our rights and risk rupture.' He must have been gratified by the general consent of opinion that where Chamberlain had been repulsed no one could have succeeded. Yet perhaps had he come with less reputation as a soldier and a statesman the Amir and his Russian adviser would have been less reluctant to receive him.

Returning to England, on resigning command of the Madras army, his talents and experience were still placed at the service of his country, and the highest honours were still in store for him. He was military Member of the Council of India, and in 1890 his brilliant services were acknowledged by the bestowal of a field-marshal's baton. He had left on the Indian frontier a name to conjure with, and he was followed into retirement by the affectionate admiration of the soldiers he had led, and even the tribes-

men he had subjugated. Never sparing himself, he was somewhat exacting with his staff, but he was adored by the rank and file, and the regimental officers were devoted to him. Stories of his gallantry in action were long told round the camp-fires. With the sabre he had few rivals and no superior; but one incident may be recalled which shows his imperturbable coolness. In a siege in the Sikh war a bastion had been mined, and the powder was to be exploded. Chamberlain, though a colonel, charged himself with the business, and called for half a dozen volunteers. The little party crawled forward unobserved, laid the train and fired the fuse. The men turned to run for it, when they were brought up by the call of their leader. 'Come back! No indecent haste, my lads; we will walk.' But though delighting in the actual joy of the battle, like the Duke of Wellington he detested war, and, always more ready to sheathe the sword than to draw it, he was sometimes reproached with being over-merciful to the vanquished. Rightly or wrongly, it was whispered that if there had been more of the Nicholson in his temperament there would have been less trouble in the hills.

The years of his retirement were passed between London and his seat near Southampton. The veteran *sabreur*, with as firm a seat and as light a hand as ever, was as familiar a figure in the Park as Anglesey or Combermere. Somewhat taciturn and reserved, he had few intimates; he could seldom be induced to speak of his experiences, and never of his gallant deeds. But all who came in contact with him were impressed by the gentle courtesy of his stately manner. Another of the old wardens of the marches writes that 'Chamberlain was the very soul of chivalry—the *beau-idéal* of the irregular cavalry soldier.' Still more suggestive is the tribute of a lady who frequently met him in the house of a near relative.

I used to breakfast alone with him, as our hostess did not come down till later. He always waited on me, poured out the tea, &c. I was embarrassed, for I felt it would be an honour to wait on him. He was very quiet in manner, but had a strong sense of humour; though I often longed to ask him of his experiences, I had a feeling that he never cared to talk about himself.

THE MEETING IN THE LIBRARY.

THE Library was little frequented except by the curious. It was rather inaccessible for those who would consult its learning, out-of-the-way, with slums grown up about it. For the mere idler it had no interest at all: the newest book its shelves held was two hundred years old.

The Librarian had something of a sinecure. This hot summer afternoon the garden invited him. The Library overlooked the Deanery garden, and the Librarian used to walk there sometimes in his slackest hours with the Dean's daughter. It might be said that his hours were always slack. They were short, too, for the Library closed at dusk. No provision for reading by artificial light had ever been made there.

This day of June the Librarian came in hastily. The walk had taken more time than he knew, and he was to dine at the Deanery at 8 o'clock. He had to go home and dress first. The golden pollen of the lilies between which he had been walking with the Dean's daughter was on his coat. He dismissed the porter, went into the Library, locked up his desk, whistling in a glad quick way something after the manner of the blackbird in the cedar outside, took the great bunch of keys, locked the Library door behind him, and went home.

He had not noticed in one of the recesses a young man asleep with his head upon his arms, his arms folded upon a table, in the window overlooking the garden.

The green twilight came after the rose and violet. The evening star shone out in the green, and the young moon came after. Lights sprang up in the Deanery house across the garden. The birds went to sleep, and the scent of the lilies grew stronger in the dew, for the country was close at hand, and the dews yet drenched the Deanery garden as though it were a meadow.

The scent of lilies was strong as a narcotic. Humphrey Brandon's head fell sideways in his sleep, revealing his face. It was a fair handsome face and a good one, although the mouth, sweet as it was, lacked firmness. The forehead, white above its line of sunburn, wore a frown. A name broke from his lips,

Amaryllis; another name, Margaret. The frown grew deeper: a look of pain scored the young handsome face in its sleep.

Master Humphrey Brandon had been sleeping ill of late, or his slumbers had not now been so profound in spite of his hard pillow and the evident uneasiness of his thoughts.

He had come into the Library on his way back from a garden-party where he had had an exquisite hour with Amaryllis. Only six weeks before her disturbing presence had troubled his life—a gay, enchanting, bewildering presence. He and Amaryllis had strayed away from the rest of the company by a pond, had fed the ducks, and afterwards rowed in a crazy boat among the water-lilies. How Amaryllis had laughed! She had taken off her hat, an airy pink thing wreathed with roses, and had pinned a white and golden water-lily here and there among the roses. Her golden-brown curls clustering about her small head were as alluring as a baby's. Her violet eyes under dark lashes; her pert little white nose and firm white chin; the red lips innocently smiling over little perfect teeth; the milk-white throat above the falling lace collar: all these beauties had so bewitched him that he had forgotten Margaret.

Once away from Amaryllis he had remembered. And it was not the first time he had forgotten, not the first time by many that he had remembered.

Margaret was the fair saint of his boyish dreams. She was six years his senior, and she had meant to him all of calm and rest and soothing the world possessed. She had been something of a religion to him.

They were not declared lovers, but Humphrey Brandon had always been sure that one day he would ask his saint to become mere woman for him and that she would stoop into his arms. Then had come—Amaryllis. He knew that if he could go to Margaret and tell her about Amaryllis, she would bless him as she had always blessed him, and bid him bring the girl to her that she might love her as well.

But though he had no fear on that score, yet he was not sure that he wanted to go to Margaret with his tale. Just now he was bewitched, bedevilled when Amaryllis came in view. The hem of her muslin skirt, the point of her little high-heeled shoe were things to fall down before. He had hardly ever looked lower than Margaret's eyes, those true eyes, with immortal lights steady in them.

He wanted Amaryllis, and yet he was quite sure that his eternal need would be for Margaret.

Perhaps if he gave his passion for Amaryllis the rein, it would fall as dead as scattered rose-petals in a little while, and his heart would return to Margaret, if indeed it had ever strayed from her.

Such thoughts, and trouble at his own frailty had kept him awake of nights. He was not of the stuff of which sinners are made. He could not palter with his conscience light-heartedly.

If he waited!—the hurt to Amaryllis would be nothing. He had heard her laugh with a new lover before he was out of hearing. It was perhaps her gay indifference, her light, sweet, untouched coldness of nature which made her charm for him. She was as virginal as a rose-bud and as lovely. Certainly Amaryllis would not suffer.

A hundred times he made up his mind to drift with the tide, a hundred times unmade it. That last laugh of Amaryllis had flung him in torments of jealousy this afternoon. But he would not turn back. He was on his way to Margaret. Only first he must rest and grow calm, for her tender, faithful eyes would discover the traces of recent conflict on his face. And where could a better place be found to rest than the Library? So he had turned in there and fallen asleep, worn out by sleeplessness and emotion, lulled by the fragrance of the lilies and the warmth of the drowsy air, full of the humming of innumerable bees.

He awoke cold, with the dews from the garden upon his hair, and in a sleepy bewilderment. The moon was gone now, and there was only a dusky fragrance, sown with a million stars, outside the open window. The place had been in darkness but for a faint light, a light that wavered hither and thither.

He rose stiffly and looked beyond the recess. There was a figure holding a candle in its hand going from shelf to shelf, taking out a book and replacing it.

While he looked the figure turned its head, and lifted the candle high to see him the better.

What an odd figure it was! It was that of a man about sixty, dressed in clerical garb of an ancient cut, with white bands, and wearing on its head a bag-wig. Humphrey Brandon stared. The strange person looked at him with a piercing gaze from cavernous eyes. The face was ivory-pale, and was furrowed with the track of storms. Bitterness and desolation were in its expression.

'So you have awakened, sir,' the visitor said grimly.

'I don't know how I came to fall asleep,' answered Humphrey Brandon apologetically. 'I suppose you are . . . the Dean?'

'I am the Dean,' the other replied.

'I must have slept some time.' Humphrey Brandon looked at his watch. 'By Jove, half-past twelve! It was only half-past six when I came in. How did I come to do it? I was on my way to keep . . . an appointment.'

'With Amaryllis or with Margaret?'

Humphrey Brandon stared at the sardonic face.

'How do you know?' he began, stammering.

'I am no wizard,' the other replied. 'You talked in your sleep. Amaryllis, Margaret: no scale could have balanced them more evenly.'

The hue of guilt crept into Humphrey Brandon's face. His lashes, dark and curling like a girl's, fell on his cheeks.

'You are a coxcomb,' said the old man severely, putting down the candle in its old-fashioned candlestick on the Librarian's desk.

Some wild impulse to make confession and ask counsel came over the young man. He flung himself with a reckless air into one of the worn leather-covered chairs.

'Perhaps I am,' he said humbly. 'Anyhow, Mr. Dean, you are ghostly, and I need ghostly counsel.' The Dean snuffed the candle, with a whimsical smile on his full lips. 'It is your duty to help erring mortals. Will you not take the chair opposite to mine, and listen to me?'

The Dean took the chair, and dropped his cheek upon his hand. The bag-wig fell either side his face. Humphrey Brandon stared at him. Who was it he was like as he sat so? Some baffling memory played about the young man's mind and eluded him. He forgot it then, fascinated by the eyes in their cavernous hollows. They were burning as though they needed the slaking of tears. The face was the face of one deeply unhappy.

It was easier to pour out the tale of his vacillation to such a face. When he had finished there was a pause. Then the man opposite him sighed so hollowly that the young man started.

'I said you were a coxcomb,' said the Dean, 'but you are only a fool. You must go back to Margaret. Not for all the

Amaryllises in the world would you break Margaret's heart. And you would break it, though she might live for twenty years after it was broken and show you always a smiling face. There are such women.'

Humphrey Brandon, a creature of impulses, sprang to his feet, would have taken the Dean's hand if it had not been hidden somewhere in the folds of the gown, and cried out that the Dean was right, he would return to Margaret, and see Amaryllis no more till Margaret was his wife.

'It was fortunate I met you, sir,' he said. 'While I slept my soul was tossed about on a rack of pain. Dreams are heavy things.'

'Do I not know them?' replied the Dean, 'Dreams, aye, and wakings. Over in yonder Deanery I have had such pangs as you could not dream of. There was a night when the torchlights burned in the church.'

He seemed as though he would have said more, but he broke off abruptly.

'Let me at least thank you,' said the lad.

'If I have saved another soul from a crime like my own . . .'
Again the voice died off in a hollow sighing.

'Well, I shall be saying good night, or rather good morning,' said the younger man, abashed, as though he looked on some suffering he had no right to see.

'Why, we are locked in!' he said in surprise after trying the door. 'But you have the key, Mr. Dean?'

'I have no key. You must wait till the Librarian comes in the morning.'

'But you? You were locked in with me. How careless the Librarian must be!'

'I am often here through the hours of the night.'

'Ah well, I shall go the garden way. I can drop from the window, and scale the gates. See, it is morning. How the sky trembles!'

All of a sudden he thought that the Library with its ancient books smelt mouldily: it was the air of graves and charnel-houses. The East indeed was trembling like a multitude of wings. A bird called from the cedar, and was answered by a drowsy twittering. He touched an ivy-leaf, and his hand was wet with dew. He could see the lilies glimmering in the dark of the garden. Their smell came sharp and fresh. He was

going to Margaret, and he felt as though this were his wedding-morning.

With his hand on the sill in act to drop he turned his face to say good-bye. But what had happened to the Dean? He was standing as he had seen him first with the candle in his hand. But surely he was fading, fading into mists and dreams. A mere gray outline of a figure was there now, with only the eyes of it alive. As he stood staring they too went out, and the Library was in darkness.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

OF LITERARY FORGERS.¹

THE forgery of literary documents is a trade that commends itself to certain limited talents on more than one ground: it may be pursued anywhere, and, as the newspapers say, 'without detriment to previous employment.' The knowledge required is neither deep nor wide; the reward is often wealth and always notoriety. The enterprise of the literary forger, moreover, is spiced with a splendid uncertainty; he is never quite sure when or how he will be found out, and since his crime is seldom visited with a heavy penalty, he may enjoy all the excitement of the uncaught criminal, without fearing the boredom of a trial and the pain of a long imprisonment. True, the most ingenious forger of modern times—Vrain Lucas—was rewarded by two years of enforced inaction, but he was foolish enough to mix himself up in a scientific scandal, and did not pursue his art for its own sake. Of the rest there is scarce one that has not been openly flattered by scholars and courted by the great. To recognise a brilliant discovery before one's fellows is to share the glory of the discoverer, and the clumsiest forgery has never failed to win the adherence of half a dozen reputable enthusiasts. In other words, the seeds of deception always fall upon some small patch of fertile ground, and he is a bad husbandman indeed who does not gather a rich harvest.

Consider, for instance, George Psalmanazar, a soldier of fortune, who could boast no humour and little learning. Yet this Frenchman not only forged books; he forged a religion, he forged a language, he forged himself. Born in the neighbourhood of Avignon, he left his native city to seek his fortune, and, finding that the door of common success opened only at the knock of industry, he speedily resolved upon a course of what in less happy days he called 'pride, folly, and stupid villainy.' Tired of carrying a musket now for the Dutch, now for the Germans, he proclaimed himself a native of Formosa, got himself converted to Christianity by Mr. Innes, as fine an artist in forgery as himself, and enjoyed such a career of honoured ease as falls to the lot of few. He came to England, duly heralded, was petted by the

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clergy, interviewed the Archbishop of Canterbury, who could not understand his Latin, and finished at Oxford the studies which he had begun in a French monastery. It is difficult to say which got the greater glory, the pious Formosan, or the devout clergyman, who had shown him the error of his savage faith; but they both prospered exceedingly, and were wise enough to play their part with gravity and thoroughness. Psalmanazar, that no touch of realism should be wanting, lived upon raw meat, roots and herbs, and was soon used to this savage diet, though the fragrant cookery of the south should have given him a delicate palate. But while he pretended to live upon Formosan fare, he did not neglect the weightier matters. With Innes' aid, he had already sketched the language of his Eastern home, and he submitted specimens of the dialect to the scholars of England. 'By means of his unhappy readiness at inventing of characters, languages, &c.'—to quote his own words—he translated into pure Formosan a passage from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, and thus aroused the curiosity of the philologists. Then, that the historians also might profit by his experience, he composed a treatise upon Formosa, which, translated from the Latin, had an immediate and triumphant success. Now, Psalmanazar, having a thorough knowledge of his public, was at no pains to make his treatise reasonable or consistent. Its facts, he tells us, were borrowed from Varenus' description of Japan, and the booksellers were so loudly impatient that he could only devote to its composition the leisure snatched from two months' dissipation. It was, therefore, 'crude, imperfect, and absurd,' but it answered its purpose perfectly. It set London in a blaze of curiosity; it procured its author a convenient apartment in one of the most considerable colleges at Oxford, and made him 'a great favourite with the fair sex.' What more could an adventurer desire? And he won it all by a fraud which ten minutes' candid criticism might have exposed.

But if his erudition was small, his cunning was great. At Oxford he lived a life of gossip and laziness, while he was awake, and let a burning candle demonstrate his industry while he slept. He feigned a limp, that he might be thought to have contracted gout by overwork, and still escaped suspicion. In fact, had he not foolishly lent his name to an obvious imposition, called 'white Formosan ware,' he might have continued his chicanery without let or hindrance. Such success as he attained he owed, no doubt, to a gift of persuasion, which enabled him not

only to deceive the many eminent clerics who believed what they hoped to be true, but to win the admiration of Samuel Johnson, a critic not usually tolerant of charlatans. Of course, it was Psalmanazar's affected piety which disturbed the lexicographer's judgment, who declared that he would as soon contradict a bishop as the repentant Formosan. But Johnson loved the man's company for its own sake. Of all the men he had known he sought George Psalmanazar the most. 'I used to go and sit with him,' said he, 'at an ale-house in the city,' and one would gladly give up all the specimens of the Formosan tongue, if only Boswell had been present for an hour.

Yet, expert as he was in adapting his slender means to a great end, Psalmanazar was no sooner detected than he lost all pride in his exploits. The 'Memoirs,' published after his death, are a long and wearisome apology for the only enterprise which he was capable of conducting to success. Throughout this lachrymose performance the note of hypocrisy is loud and clear. Psalmanazar was a forger from his cradle, and had he not called himself a Formosan he would have masqueraded as an Irishman—he did for a while—or a Hottentot. But whether or not this candid confession of 'youthful follies' and 'shameful imposture' be a mere forgery like the rest, we admire him least in the guise of a penitent, which becomes him not half so well as the taste for raw meat, the leg lamed by study, and the candle which burned all night in his room at Oxford. In defence of William Ireland, the nearest rival to Psalmanazar, it may be said that he never stooped to so nonsensical an apology. Detection did not diminish his pride, and his confession is as cynical as his forgery. He was, as it were, dedicated to the craft from his childhood, and Chatterton was at once his hero and his example. In his scrapbook, which still exists, snippets relating to the author of Thomas Rowley's poems are piously treasured, and he himself has described a visit reverentially paid to the shrine of Chatterton at Bristol. While he was delighted at the tumult of applause which greeted the exhibition of his famous relics and manuscripts, his delight burned just as brightly when all men knew him for an impostor as when Royalty itself chattered of his valuable discovery. The shout of laughter which greeted Kemble's delivery of the famous line, 'And when this solemn mockery is o'er,' saddened the author, but did not shake his vanity. No vile penitence for him! He would not whine, like the wretched Psalmanazar, in sorrow at a

misspent youth. He did but confess the forgery, when deception was no longer possible, and bragged of his conquests, as well he might. Great scholars had signed a profession of faith; the ingenious Mr. Boswell, 'after a tumbler of warm brandy-and-water,' had declared, 'Well, I shall now die contented, since I have lived to witness the present day,' and knelt down 'to kiss the invaluable relics of our bard.' Such was the forger's triumph, and he recorded it with satisfaction. But nothing reveals the arrogant character of William Ireland so clearly as the indignation which he felt and expressed at Malone's ruthless criticism. It was Malone who pilloried him without pity, inviting the world to pelt him with what missiles they chose, and he retorted with a lofty indictment of Malone's scholarship. He made no pretence that his documents were genuine, but he would not admit the grounds of condemnation. It is truly a noble spectacle: the detected forger proudly contemptuous of friends and foes alike. Those who accepted his documents were no better than fools; those who rejected them were poisoned by the venom of jealousy. In brief, Ireland played the game at all points with perfect skill. His forgeries were just bad enough to escape the sanguine eye of the people, and he presented them in such a manner as may justly be styled heroic.

The other forgers who displayed their talent in England during the last century had neither Ireland's skill nor Ireland's luck. Of course the gentleman who persuaded Moxon to publish and Robert Browning to introduce the sham letters of Shelley enjoyed his little jest; and it is certain that Simonides's great attainments fitted him to deceive the great librarians. But even Simonides met with a sharp rebuff at the Bodleian when he showed a masterpiece to Mr. Coxe with the question, 'To what period does that belong?' and was told offhand, 'To the middle of the nineteenth century.' For the rest, George Gordon Byron was a clumsy botcher, and the clerk who, ten years since, forged letters of Burns and Scott to gratify the patriotism of Scottish Americans, deserved no more than he got—a term of imprisonment. Yet, if the art has languished in England since the time of Ireland, the France of the nineteenth century may boast a literary forger of admirable skill and unexampled success. That the name of Vrain Lucas should be forgotten already is an untoward accident of fate, for he completely mystified the Academicians of France and set the

professors of Europe by the ears. Moreover, he may be taken as a model of his kind. He possessed all the qualities, good and bad, which go to the making of a successful forger—facile half-knowledge, industry, courage, optimism. Above all, he had the tact to find a victim perfectly suited to his talent, whom he humoured with remarkable address, and he has left such a record of artistic achievement as is still unrivalled.

Vrain-Denis Lucas—or, as he was commonly known, Vrain Lucas—was born at Lanneray, in the department of the Eure-et-Loir, some three years after the battle of Waterloo. Like many another great man, he was of narrow circumstances and humble parentage. His father followed the ungrateful trade of a day-labourer in the fields; and there is reason to believe that the son, unmindful of the distinction which awaited him, also handled the spade. But the country could not long hold captive so fine a spirit, and Vrain Lucas soon left home to seek his fortune in the great world which lay outside Lanneray. At first his poverty compelled him to take menial service in a gentleman's family; but this was a mere incident in a life of adventure, and had no other influence upon our hero than to give his manners the polish which made him famous. Far more congenial was an employment which he found in a notary's office at Châteaudun, where he was presently promoted to be clerk in the law court. Many a useful hint did he gather from the parchments which he conned or copied here; but what was of greater import to the future, he devoted his scanty leisure to a serious course of study. While his colleagues sunned themselves on the boulevard, sipped absinthe, or rattled the dominoes on the marble table of a café, he read in the public library or composed poems, which gave him the same sort of reputation at Châteaudun as Lucien de Rubempré enjoyed at Angoulême. Though his education had been sadly neglected, he had an unmistakable taste for polite letters, and when once he had found encouragement he wasted no time in the idle pursuit of vain fiction or vainer journalism. Historical research was his passion, and day after day his slim figure, bent with study, might be seen flitting among the shelves of the public library. The 'History of the Academy,' the 'Library of Authors who have written History'—such were the tomes which engrossed his leisure; and so highly was he esteemed that when he left Châteaudun a librarian wrote upon his *registre de prêt* these words: 'The industrious M. Lucas is going to live in Paris. He deserves to succeed. A young man

from Lanneray, self-educated.' And succeed he did, far beyond the expectation of the sympathetic librarian.

In 1851, then, Vrain Lucas arrived in Paris, with no baggage save a bundle of poems, and an ambition fixed upon antiquarian pursuits. He was not precisely a youth—he had passed his thirty-third birthday. But precocity is no virtue; and as that fruit is sweetest which ripens slowly, so the finest talents come late to efflorescence. His poems, as their titles—'La Guirlande de Flore' and 'Ce que j'aime à voir'—suggest, were too classic for the taste of the time. He could not hope to challenge the supremacy of Victor Hugo. Moreover, as the librarian confessed, he was self-educated. No kindly monk had taught him the rudiments of Latin and Greek, as they taught the youthful Psalmanazar, whose quick precocity and quicker extinction make him a striking contrast to his ingenious compatriot. Like Shakespeare, Vrain Lucas had no Greek and little Latin:

On ne m'a, grâce au destin,
Appris ni grec, ni latin.

Thus he wrote in his elegant verse; and this ignorance of the classic tongues, as will presently be seen, profoundly influenced his art. At the outset he knew not what to do in Paris; he had neither friends to aid him nor such genius as could be readily turned into gold. His one resource was to take what work offered itself; and by great good luck he found employment in the *cabinet généalogique* of a certain Letellier. Here at last was proper scope for the antiquarian zeal which burned within him. For Letellier was ready at a moment's notice to invent a pedigree or sketch a coat-of-arms. His office was a factory of false titles and forged documents; old parchments, curious inks, fantastic names and phrases were his stock-in-trade; and Vrain Lucas learned under his tutelage many a secret contrivance which he afterwards turned to good account. Above all, he plumbed the depths of human vanity. He saw with what ease a man may be deceived who wishes to believe in falsehood, and he acquired a keen insight into the credulous character upon which a literary forger must work. So while he performed the duties of Letellier's tout he practised himself in the subtle arts of deception, and was able, when the time came, to gull M. Chasles as he chose.

Meanwhile, though Paris and the office of Letellier gave him every opportunity for the historical research which he loved, he was not content. He was not satisfied even with a ready access to all the biographical dictionaries and encyclopædias of what

was then called the 'Bibliothèque Impériale.' Vain as his victims, he sighed for the wealth and notoriety which seldom come to the humble inventor of pedigrees. His election, as a corresponding member, to the Société Archéologique du Département d'Eure-et-Loir was a momentary triumph, and so well cultivated was his faculty of persuasion that soon afterwards he was appointed head of a provincial library. But none knew better than Vrain Lucas what he could and could not do. He dared not attempt to catalogue a library on the very scanty Latin that was his, and, rather than expose himself to failure, he remained in Paris, living among old books, old manuscripts, and autographs of all ages.

His real chance came when he met M. Chasles, the celebrated mathematician, for in M. Chasles he found precisely the victim which his ingenuity demanded. Now, M. Chasles, though he was a distinguished member of the Académie des Sciences, and had been honoured by our own Royal Society, was a man of simple faith and exquisite trustfulness. Moreover, he was a zealous collector of autographs and old books, and he accepted with enthusiasm whatever was brought him by Vrain Lucas. The few real treasures that he possessed he gladly sold, in order to buy the most impudent forgeries ever devised by the wit of man. His confidence in Vrain Lucas was unshakable. 'We are of the same country,' he said pathetically, 'and I thought him incapable of deceiving me.' Such is always the attitude of the pigeon, who soon grows to love the friendly rook. Nor was Vrain Lucas the man to lose the most brilliant opportunity which ever came to a literary forger. His materials were ready to his hand; he had not served his apprenticeship in Letellier's workshop for nothing; and his knowledge was not so deep as to destroy his faith in that which his own hand created. So he fabricated letters from the great men of all ages, and sold them as fast as he could turn them out to the trusting mathematician. The story told of their origin was ingenious and convincing: they came, said he, from the famous cabinet of the Chevalier Blondeau de Charnage, whose collection, made in the middle of the eighteenth century, was still remembered by scholars. At the Revolution the cabinet was purchased by M. le Comte de Boisjournain, who during the Terror emigrated to America and took his treasures with him. The adventures of these precious papers, however, did not end with their arrival in America. On their homeward voyage they suffered shipwreck, and were one and all stained by salt water.

Their present possessor, whom Vrain Lucas always called with an air of mystery *le vieux monsieur*, loved them like his life, and they were wrung out of him one by one by the stress of poverty. Whatever money was paid for the priceless letters was, of course, handed over to *le vieux monsieur*, and the forger kept no more for his pains than twenty-five per cent. It is but natural, then, that sometimes he was hard-up, and asked the confiding M. Chasles for a small sum, which should come to him alone. Nor was *le vieux monsieur* too easy to manage. Now and again he was tortured by remorse that priceless relics should be lost to his family, and his remorse was acuter when a fire-eating relative, called in the secret correspondence *le vieux militaire*, angrily protested that they should be repurchased. It was the prettiest comedy to all concerned, save M. Chasles, who in his anxiety was more than once inclined to have the forger arrested, not because he had been swindled, but because he feared that these valuable papers should be sold and sent out of France, whose chief ornament they were.

Thus, in the course of a few years, Vrain Lucas sold to M. Chasles 27,472 forgeries for the comfortable price of 150,000 francs. To give the names of the correspondents would be to exhaust the roll of fame. They belonged to all countries and all ages. The letters of Sappho, Thales, Virgil, Julius Cæsar, Zeno, St. Luke, Lazarus, Montaigne, Rabelais, the Cid, Molière, Newton, Galileo, Pascal, Louis XIV., and countless others jostled each other in the ample chests of M. le Comte de Boisjourdain. The impartiality of Vrain Lucas was unique; he neglected nobody who had a place in the 'Biographie Universelle,' and when he professed a doubt as to a signature which he had devised himself, he would ask M. Chasles, with an ingenuous smile, to consult that repertory of useful knowledge. But whether they came from Greece or Italy or from modern France, they were all written upon paper of the same age and the same quality, pleasantly stained by time or travel, and water-marked with a *fleur-de-lis*. Of this paper the forger was very sparing. The great correspondents wrote always upon half-sheets and curbed their eloquence. But not only was the paper uniform; the letters, one and all, were written in French. And here, I think, Vrain Lucas showed his real grandeur. Latin and Greek had been denied him at school, and so he cheerfully made the best of it. Having precisely gauged the credulity of his victim, he harmonised his means to his end like a true artist. He made one concession to antiquity:

the letters of Sappho and Julius Cæsar, to name but two, are written in what he thought was Old French, and in a bold handwriting which evidently betokened age. Besides, if the paper were suspicious, if the language would have made any other than M. Chasles roar with laughter, the ink was impeccable. How it was made remains the secret of Vrain Lucas, but true it is that it resisted all the tests which commonly expose the ink of modern fabrication, and won over many an expert to the forger's side.

The style of the letters is simple and impartial. There was no nonsense about Vrain Lucas; he had no more ambition to mimic the manner than to reproduce the handwriting of his august correspondents. He was quite content if the writer of a masterpiece was contemporary with its recipient, and what was good enough for him was obviously good enough for M. Chasles. A specimen will best illustrate his method, and no better specimen can be chosen than the following letter addressed by Sappho to Phaon: 'Sapho à son très amé Phaon Salut. Très chier amé pres de ces bords charmans où la veue admire en s'égarent une immense estendue, où la pleine des mers et la vouste des cieux semblent dans le lointaing se confondre, non loin d'icelle rive est un lit de verture qu'ombrage un orme épais et qu'une onde pure arrose,' and the rest. Wherever you turn in this astounding correspondence, you find the same exquisite commonness of thought, the same superb absurdity of language. After Sappho comes Thales, with a letter to the 'très illustre et très redouté prince Ambigat, roy des Gaules,' in which the 'très puissant prince' is informed that water is 'le principe de toutes choses.' In like manner Archimedes salutes his beloved Hiero, Alexander Rex offers a few words of comfort to his 'très amé Aristote,' Vercingetorix grants a safe-conduct to 'Trogue Pompée.' More amazing still, 'Magdeleine' sends greeting 'à son très amé Lazare,' whom she addresses as her brother, which proves that Vrain Lucas knew the 'Biographie Universelle' better than the Bible. 'Mon très amé frère,' writes Magdeleine, 'ce que me mandez de Petrus de nostre doux Jesus me fait esperer que bien tot le verrons icy et me dispose l'y bien recevoir, nostre seur Marthe sen rejouit aussy. Sa santé est fort chancelante et je crains son trespas,' and so on. Grotesque as it is, it was sufficient at once to delight the heart of M. Chasles and to fill the pocket of Vrain Lucas.

Still more curious is the praise of France, which is the excuse for most of these astounding letters. M. Chasles had a strenuous love of his country, and Vrain Lucas played on his

patriotism as on a pipe. Greek and Roman, Egyptian and Hebrew agree in hymning the glory of France, and, oddly enough, they all display a guilty knowledge of the vast correspondence brought to light by Vrain Lucas. When Aristotle writes to Alexander it is to request that he may visit Gaul, and there study the science of the Druids. Alexander affably replies that he could not be better employed. Cleopatra, in addressing 'son très amé Jules Cesar empereur,' declares that when 'nostre fils Cesarion' is old enough to bear the voyage she will send him to Marseilles, that he may receive his education at the centre of the universe. Not even Lazarus, quaintly styled by himself 'Lazare le ressuscité,' can escape this passion for Gaul, and in writing to his 'très amé Petrus' he professes his agreement with Caesar and Cicero, who assert that 'the Druids indulge in human sacrifice.' All this, of course, was highly flattering to M. Chasles' national pride, and doubtless he took pleasure also in the opinion of Charlemagne (confided to his 'très docte et très amé Alcuin') that the Celtic tongue was the mother of all languages. Such was the supreme cleverness of Vrain Lucas: he discovered previously what his client wanted, and found it for him. No difficulty baffled his research. For instance, the letters of Charles Quint are no less rare than those of Rabelais, yet M. Chasles possessed a considerable correspondence which had passed between these two distinguished men. Again, La Bruyère put pen to paper as seldom as might be; the united collections of the world can only discover a poor score of his letters; yet Vrain Lucas obtained from *le vieux monsieur* no less than 739 specimens of La Bruyère's penmanship!

But at last the tardy foot of retribution overtook the ingenious author. M. Chasles could no longer control his pride; he could no longer forbear to trumpet his triumph abroad. On July 6, 1867, the learned mathematician communicated to the Académie des Sciences two letters addressed by Rotrou to Richelieu, proposing the foundation of an Academy in Paris such as Clémence Isaure had established at Toulouse, and dated some thirty years earlier than the birth of that institution. Paris was still agog with interest in a rewritten chapter of history, when (a week later) M. Chasles laid before the same Academy two letters from Blaise Pascal to Robert Boyle, and four notes, signed 'Pascal,' which proved conclusively that Pascal had forestalled Newton's great discovery. The pride of France was aflame in a moment. Once more, it was said, perfidious Albion had filched the honour which belonged to another. M. Chasles

woke up to find himself a national hero, and the lightest word spoken in contempt of his documents was accepted as a plain proof of treachery. MM. Duhamel and Fougère, who threw doubt upon the letters of Pascal, were denounced as enemies of their fatherland; and every objection which pedantry could raise was instantly controverted by new letters drawn from the endless store of *le vieux monsieur*. During the anxious weeks which followed, Vrain Lucas worked with unceasing energy. A set of letters which passed between the aged Pascal and the boy Newton convinced some waverers, and Galileo, suddenly introduced (with a sheaf of documents) into the discussion, proved a welcome diversion. But meanwhile Sir David Brewster and other men of science on our side of the Channel denounced the letters as clumsy forgeries. M. Chasles answered them by a new sheaf of letters from Pascal, Kepler, anybody, and thought the matter settled. Why, indeed, should he trouble to confute a mob of Britons, impervious to argument when their pride was wounded? The discussion endured for two years, until in 1869 the Académie, through its perpetual secretary, declared that M. Chasles had proved his point, and that the letters were genuine. It was decided that no impostor could imitate 'the noble simplicity' of Louis XIV., whose opinion of Galileo was held sacred. Had the letters been forged, said the Abbé Moigno, the forger must have been a demi-god. Paris was jubilant, M. Thiers embraced the Academician in the name of patriotism, and patriots cheered Blaise Pascal in the streets with an enthusiasm which would have delighted that master of irony. Truly the love of country has been responsible for many follies, but never for a greater folly than that which put poor, well-meaning M. Chasles upon a pinnacle of glory.

Then came ruin. On April 12, 1869—a belated All Fools' Day—M. Chasles received the formal approval of France. A week later M. Breton, an official of the Observatory, discovered sixteen of the forged letters from Pascal and one of Galileo's in M. Saverien's '*Histoire des Philosophes Modernes*' (1761). M. Chasles was unabashed; he declared that M. Saverien had stolen his originals without acknowledgment, and promptly produced a letter from Montesquieu to Saverien recommending him to Madame de Pompadour, who, as is known, possessed a vast collection of autographs. At every fresh step taken by M. Breton and his friends, Vrain Lucas was ready with a fresh letter. The innocent M. Chasles told him what he desired to prove, and the

forger instantly obliged his patron. How long this see-saw of proof and counter-proof would have lasted is uncertain ; but after two months of idle discussion Le Verrier summed up the case with pitiless logic. He tore the fabric of M. Chasles's patriotism to shreds, and at last that amiable philosopher was forced to confess that he had been duped. But even in the act of confession he still expressed a wavering belief in the man who had befooled him. 'La collection s'étend,' said he, with a pensive naïveté, 'aux premiers temps, et même au-delà.' *Même au-delà* is a charming revelation of implicit trust, and one almost regrets that it was ever disturbed. Justice, however, claimed her victim, and Vrain-Denis Lucas was duly arraigned. To prove his guilt was easy enough : he had defrauded the poor old mathematician of some six thousand pounds, and the most interesting problem offered for solution was, what did he do with the money? He was a man of simplicity and refinement; the most diligent inquiry revealed no more than the good order and regularity of his life. He lived quietly in the Rue St. Georges with an amiable mistress. He received no company, and sought none, save that of M. Chasles. When he was well off he dined at the Café Riche, for he was of those who prefer a cutlet with elegance to a Gargantuan feast ill-served. If for the moment he lacked money he was content with a *crêmerie*. Examined by the magistrate, he preserved a dignified reticence where his private life was touched, but he justified his public actions with eloquence and ingenuity.

In face of the jury, he once more beat the drum of patriotism. 'Whatever is said or done,' said he, 'my conscience is calm. I have the conviction that I never did any man a wrong. If to reach my end I did not act with perfect discretion, if I sometimes followed a tortuous path, if I used a trick to strike the attention and to arouse the curiosity of the public, it was merely to recall certain historical facts which are easily forgotten or unknown even to the learned. . . . I blended instruction with amusement. . . . M. Chasles had never before been listened to so patiently. . . . Yes, whatever happens, I shall always be conscious that I acted, if not with discretion, at least with uprightness and patriotism.' There is a directness in this oration worthy a hero of old Rome, but the jury was unmoved, caring, it is evident, no more for science than for patriotism. The forger was condemned to two years' imprisonment, and it was only after his condemnation that the worst piece of luck befell him. He was sentenced in February

1870; five months later war was declared against Germany, and Paris was packed with soldiers eagerly shouting 'À Berlin!' Thus in a moment he lost the hope of glory. His marvellous achievements were forgotten in the misery which settled upon Paris when the outburst of military enthusiasm was spent. M. de Goncourt complained that one of his masterpieces missed the chance of a triumphant success by the declaration of war, but poor Vrain Lucas suffered more deeply than the author of 'Charles Demailly' from the German invasion. Though his ingenious forgeries brought him a comfortable income, he could not be content without notoriety, and he forfeited all chance of immediate fame by a foolish turn of the political wheel. But the war is now docketed in the pigeon-holes of history, and it is time to remember those who have distinguished themselves in the arts of peace. Not while patriotism beats in the breast of a single Frenchman should the humble antiquary be forgotten, who, for the glory of France, persuaded Sappho to address Phaon in the French tongue, and who restored to Blaise Pascal, their true discoverer, the laws of gravity.

Vrain Lucas was, like all of his kind, half-educated. His natural wits travelled faster than his knowledge, and no course of painful research had dulled his fancy. Too facile to be critical, he allowed himself such freedoms as would be impossible for a schoolboy; yet he never lost faith in himself, he never shook the confidence of his dupe. But one gift he shared with others of his kind—a gift higher and rarer than mere erudition—eloquent persuasiveness. His manners, one is sure, were irresistible, and even had poor M. Chasles attempted to resist, it would have been useless. For successful forgery is a species of hypnotism. As the Indian juggler persuades the spectators that he disappears at the end of a rope flung into the air, or that he brandishes a sword red with an infant's blood, so the forger induces his willing victim to believe that a letter written yesterday in ill-spelt French is the true Greek of Sappho. M. Chasles was, during the eight years of fraud, completely hypnotised. He believed what he hoped and what he was told. Yet it should be remembered that a forgery succeeds only when the credulity of the victim keeps pace with the forger's skill. The victim, in truth, is of the rarer clay, and assuredly the world will match Vrain Lucas a dozen times before it again encounters so simple, credulous, and kindly an old gentleman as M. Michel Chasles.

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

A CENTURY OF IRISH HUMOUR.¹

IN a preface to the French translation of Sienkiewicz's works, M. de Wyzewa, the well-known critic, himself a Pole, makes a suggestive comparison between the Polish and the Russian natures. The Pole, he says, is quicker, wittier, more imaginative, more studious of beauty, less absorbed in the material world than the Russian—in a word, infinitely more gifted with the artistic temperament; and yet in every art the Russian has immeasurably outstripped the Pole. His explanation, if not wholly convincing, is at least suggestive. The Poles are a race of dreamers, and the dreamer finds his reward in himself. He does not seek to conquer the world with arms or with commerce, with tears or with laughter; neither money tempts him nor fame, and the strenuous, unremitting application which success demands, whether in war, business, or the arts, is alien to his being.

The same observation and the same reasoning apply with equal force to the English and the Irish. No one who has lived in the two countries will deny that the Irish are apparently the more gifted race; no one can deny, if he has knowledge and candour, that the English have accomplished a great deal more, the Irish a great deal less. Nowhere is this more evident than in the productions of that faculty which Irishmen have always been reputed, and justly reputed, to possess in peculiar measure—the faculty of humour. Compare Lever, who for a long time passed as the typical Irish humorist, with his contemporaries Thackeray and Dickens. The comparison is not fair, but it suggests the central fact that the humour of Irish literature is deficient in depth, in intellectual quality, or, to put it after an Irish fashion, in gravity.

'Humorous' is a word as question-begging as 'artistic,' and he would be a rash man who should try to define either. But so much as this will readily be admitted, that humour is a habit of mind essentially complex, involving always a double vision—a reference from the public or normal standard of proportion to one that is private and personal. The humorist refuses to part with any atom of his own personality, he stamps it on whatever comes from him. 'If reasons were as plenty as blackberries,' says Falstaff,

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achieving individuality by the same kind of odd picturesque comparison as every witty Irish peasant uses in talk, to the delight of himself and his hearers. But the individuality lies deeper than phrases; Falstaff takes his private standard into battle with him. There is nothing more obviously funny than the short paunchy man, let us not say cowardly, but disclined to action, who finds himself engaged in a fight. Lever has used him a score of times (beginning with Mr. O'Leary in the row at a gambling-hell in Paris), and whether he runs or whether he fights, his efforts to do either are grotesquely laughable. Shakespeare puts that view of Falstaff too! Prince Hal words it. But Falstaff, the humorist in person, rises on the field of battle over the slain Percy and enunciates his philosophy of the better part of valour. Falstaff's estimate of honour—'that word honour' ('Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday? Doth he feel it?'), the 'grinning honour' that Sir Walter Blunt wears where the Douglas left him—is necessary to complete the humorist's vision of a battle-piece. Lever will scarcely visit you with such reflections, for the humorist of Lever's type never stands apart and smiles; he laughs loud and in company. Still less will he give you one of those speeches which are the supreme achievement of this faculty, where the speaker's philosophy is not reasoned out like Falstaff's, but revealed in a flash of the onlooker's insight. Is it pardonable to quote the account of Falstaff's death as the hostess narrates it?

'How now, Sir John, quoth I, what, man! be of good cheer. So a' cried out God, God, three or four times. Now I, to comfort him, bid him a' should not think of God; I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet.'

Humour can go no farther than that terrible, illuminating phrase, which is laughable enough, heaven knows, but scarce likely to make you laugh. Contrast the humour of that with the humour of such a story as Lever delighted in. There were two priests dining with a regiment, we all have read in 'Harry Lorrequer,' who chaffed a dour Ulster Protestant till he was the open derision of the mess. Next time they returned, the Protestant major was radiant with a geniality that they could not explain till they had to make their way out of barracks in a hurry, and found that the countersign (arranged by the major) was 'Bloody end to the Pope.' Told as Lever tells it, with all manner of jovial amplifications, that story would make anyone laugh. But it does not go deep. The thing is funny in

too obvious a way; the mirth finds too large an outlet in laughter; it does not hang about the brain, inextricable from the processes of thought; it carries nothing with it beyond the jest. And just as tears help to an assuaging of grief, so in a sense laughter makes an end of mirth. Give a feeling its instinctive vent, and you will soon be done with it, like the child who laughs and cries within five minutes; check it, and it spreads inward, gaining in intellectual quality as it loses in physical expression. The moral is, that if you wish to be really humorous you must not be too funny; and the capital defect of most Irish humour is that its aim is too simple—it does not look beyond raising a laugh.

There are brilliant exceptions in the century that lies between Sheridan and Mr. Bernard Shaw, between Maria Edgeworth and Miss Barlow. But serious art or serious thought in Ireland has always revealed itself to the English sooner or later as a species of sedition, and the Irish have with culpable folly allowed themselves to accept for characteristic excellences what were really the damning defects of their work—an easy fluency of wit, a careless spontaneity of laughter. They have taken Moore for a great poet, and Handy Andy for a humorist to be proud of. Yet an Irishman who wishes to speak dispassionately must find humour of a very different kind from that of 'Handy Andy,' or 'Harry Lorrequer' either, to commend without reserve, as a thing that may be put forward to rank with what is best in other literatures.

Taking Sheridan and Miss Edgeworth as marking the point of departure, it becomes obvious that one is at an end, the other at a beginning. Sheridan belongs body and soul to the eighteenth century; Miss Edgeworth, though her name sounds oddly in that context, is part and parcel of the romantic movement. The 'postscript which ought to have been a preface' to 'Waverley' declared, though after Scott's magnificent fashion, a real indebtedness. Sheridan's humour, essentially metropolitan, had found no use for local colour; Miss Edgeworth before Scott proved the artistic value that could be extracted from the characteristics of a special breed of people under special circumstances in a special place. An Irish poet who, like all poets, is a most suggestive and a most misleading critic has declared that modern Irish literature begins with Carleton. That is only true if we are determined to look in Irish literature for qualities that can be called Celtic—if we insist that the outlook on the world shall be the Catholic's or the peasant's. Miss Edgeworth had not a trace of the

Celt—as I conceive that rather indefinite entity—about her; but she was as good an Irishwoman as ever walked, and there are hundreds of Irish people of her class and creed looking at Irish life with kindly humorous Irish eyes, seeing pretty much what she saw, enjoying it as she enjoyed it, but with neither her power nor her will to set it down. 'Castle Rackrent' is a masterpiece; and had Miss Edgeworth been constant to the dramatic method which she then struck out for herself, with all the fine reticences that it involved, her name might have stood high in literature. Unhappily, her too exemplary father repressed the artist in her, fostered the pedagogue, and in her later books she commits herself to an attitude in which she can moralise explicitly upon the ethical and social bearings of every word and action. The fine humour in 'Ormond' is obscured by its setting; in 'Castle Rackrent' the humour shines. Sir Condry and his lady we see none the less distinctly for seeing them through the eyes of old Thady, the retainer who narrates the Rackrent history; and in the process we have a vision of old Thady himself. Now and then the novelist reminds us of her presence by some extravagantly ironic touch, as when Thady describes Sir Condry's anger with the Government 'about a place that was promised him and never given, after his supporting them against his conscience very honourably and being greatly abused for, he having the name of a great patriot in the country before.' Thady would hardly have been so ingenuous as that. But for the most part the humour is truly inherent in the situation, and you might look far for a better passage than the description of Sir Condry's parting with his lady. But it is better to illustrate from a scene perhaps less genuinely humorous, but more professedly so—Sir Condry's wake. Miss Edgeworth does not dwell on the broad farce of the entertainment; she does not make Thady eloquent over the whisky that was drunk and the fighting that began and so forth, as Lever or Carleton would certainly have been inclined to do. She fixes on the central comedy of the situation, Sir Condry's innocent vanity and its pitiable disappointment—is it necessary to recall that he had arranged for the wake himself, because he always wanted to see his own funeral? Poor Sir Condry!—even Thady, who was in the secret, had forgotten all about him, when he was startled by the sound of his master's voice from under the great-coats thrown all atop.

"Thady," says he, "I've had enough of this; I'm smothering,

and can't hear a word of all they're saying of the deceased." "God bless you, and lie still and quiet a bit longer," says I, "for my sister's afraid of ghosts, and would die on the spot with fright if she was to see you come to life all on a sudden this way without the least preparation." So he lays him still, though well-nigh stifled, and I made haste to tell the secret of the joke, whispering to one and t'other, and there was a great surprise, but not so great as he had laid out there would. "And aren't we to have the pipes and tobacco after coming so far to-night?" said some one; but they were all well enough pleased when his honour got up to drink with them, and sent for more spirits from a shebeen house where they very civilly let him have it upon credit. So the night passed off very merrily; but to my mind Sir Condy was rather upon the sad order in the midst of it all, not finding there had been such great talk about himself after his death as that he had always expected to hear.'

In the end Sir Condy died, not by special arrangement. 'He had but a poor funeral after all,' is Thady's remark; and you see with the kindly double vision of the humorist Thady's sincere regret for the circumstance that would most have afflicted the deceased, as well as the more obviously comic side of Thady's comment and Sir Condy's lifelong aspiration. Indeed, the whole narrative is shot with many meanings, and one never turns to it without a renewed faculty of laughter.

If it were necessary to compare true humour with the make-believe, a comparison might be drawn between Thady and the servant in Lady Morgan's novel 'O'Donnell.' Rory is the stage Irishman in all his commonest attitudes. But it is better to go straight on, and concern ourselves solely with the work of real literary quality, and Carleton falls next to be considered.

Of genius with inadequate equipment it is always difficult to speak. Carleton is the nearest thing to Burns that we have to show; and his faults, almost insuperable to the ordinary reader, are the faults which Burns seldom failed to display when writing in English. But to Burns there was given an instrument perfected by long centuries of use—the Scotch vernacular song and ballad; Carleton had to make his own, and the genius for form was lacking in him. Some day there may come a man of pure Irish race who will be to Carleton what Burns was to Ferguson, and then Ireland will have what it lacks; moreover, in the light of his achievement we shall see better what the pioneer accom-

plished. Every gift that Carleton had—and pathos and humour, things complementary to each other, he possessed in profusion—every gift is obscured by faulty technique. Nearly every trait is overcharged; for instance, in his story of the ‘Midnight Mass’ he rings the changes interminably upon the old business of the wonderful medicine in the vagrants’ blessed horn that had a strong odour of whisky; but what an admirably humorous figure is this same Darby O’More! Out of the ‘Poor Scholar’ alone, that inchoate masterpiece, you could illustrate a dozen phases of Carleton’s mirth, beginning with the famous sermon where the priest so artfully wheedles and coaxes his congregation into generosity towards the boy who is going out on the world, and all the while unconsciously displays his own laughable and lovable weaknesses. There you have the double vision, that helps to laugh with the priest, and to laugh at him in the same breath, as unmistakably as in the strange scene of the famine days where the party of mowers find Jimmy sick of the fever by the wayside and ‘schame a day’ from their employer to build him a rough shelter. That whole chapter, describing the indefatigable industry with which they labour on the voluntary task, their glee in the truancy from the labour for which they are paid, their casuistry over the theft of milk for the pious purpose of keeping the poor lad alive, the odd blending of cowardice and magnanimity in their terror of the sickness and in their constant care that some one should at least be always in earshot of the boy, ready to pass in to him on a long-handed shovel what food they could scrape up, their supple ingenuity in deceiving the pompous landlord who comes to oversee their work,—all that is the completest study in existence of Irish character as it came to be under the system of absolute dependence. There is nothing so just as true humour, for by the law of its being it sees inevitably two sides; and this strange compound of vices and virtues, so rich in all the softer qualities, so lacking in all the harder ones, stands there in Carleton’s pages, neither condemned nor justified, but seen and understood with a kindly insight. Carleton is the document of documents for Ireland in the years before the famine, preserving a record of conditions material and spiritual, which happily have largely ceased to exist, yet operate indefinitely as causes among us, producing eternal though eternally modifiable effects.

But, for the things in human nature that are neither of

yesterday, to-day, nor to-morrow, but unchangeable, he has the humorist's true touch. When the poor scholar is departing, and has actually torn himself away from home, his mother runs after him with a last token—a small bottle of holy water. 'Jimmy alanna,' said she, 'here's this an' carry it about you—it will keep evil from you; an' be sure to take good care of the written characther you got from the priest an' Squire Benson; an', darlin', don't be lookin' too often at the cuff o' your coat, for feard the people might get a notion that you have the banknotes sewed in it. An', Jimmy agra, don't be too lavish upon their Munsther crame; they say 'tis apt to give people the ague. Kiss me agin, agra, an' the heavens above keep you safe and well till we see you once more.'

Through all that catalogue of precautions, divine and human, one feels the mood between tears and laughter of the man who set it down. But I think you only come to the truth about Carleton in the last scene of all, when Jimmy returns to his home, a priest. Nothing could be more stilted, more laboured, than the pages which attempt to render his emotions and his words, till there comes the revealing touch. His mother at sight of him, returned unlooked-for after the long absence, loses for a moment the possession of her faculties, and cannot be restored. At last, 'I will speak to her,' said Jimmy, 'in Irish; it will go directly to her heart.' And it does.

Carleton never could speak to us in Irish; the English was still a strange tongue on his lips and in the ears of those he lived among; and his work comes down distracted between the two languages, imperfect and halting, only with flashes of true and living speech.

When you come to Lever, it is a very different story. Lever was at no lack for utterance; nobody was ever more voluble, no one ever less inclined to sit and bite his pen, waiting for the one and only word. Good or bad, he could be trusted to rattle on; and, as Trollope said, if you pulled him out of bed and demanded something witty, he would flash it at you before he was half awake. Some people are born with the perilous gift of improvisation; and the best that can be said for Lever is that he is the nearest equivalent in Irish literature, or in English either, to the marvellous faculty of D'Artagnan's creator. He has the same exuberance, the same inexhaustible supply of animal spirits, of invention that is always spirited, of wit that goes off like fireworks.

He delighted a whole generation of readers, and one reader at least in this generation he still delights; but I own that to enjoy him you must have mastered the art of skipping. Whether you take him in his earlier manner, in the 'Charles O'Malley' vein of adventure, fox-hunting, steeple-chasing, Peninsular fighting, or in his later more intellectual studies of shady financiers, needy political adventurers, and the whole generation of usurers and blacklegs, he is always good; but alas and alas! he is never good enough. His work is rotten with the disease of anecdote; instead of that laborious concentration on a single character which is necessary for any kind of creative work, but above all for humorous creation, he presents you with a sketch, a passing glimpse, and when you look to see the suggestion followed out he is off at score with a story. In the first chapter of 'Davenport Dunn,' for instance, there is an Irish gentleman on the Continent, a pork-butcher making his first experience of Italy, hit off to the life. But a silhouette—and a very funny silhouette—is all that we get of Mr. O'Reilly, and the figures over whom Lever had taken trouble—for in that work Lever did take trouble—are not seen with humour. Directly he began to think, his humour left him; it is as if he had been funny in watertight compartments. And perhaps that is why, here as elsewhere, he shrank from the necessary concentration of thought.

There is always a temptation to hold a brief for Lever, because he has been most unjustly censured by Irishmen, even in so august and impartial a court as the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' as if he had traduced his countrymen. Did Thackeray, then, malign the English? The only charge that may fairly be brought against him is the one that cannot be rebutted—the charge of superficiality and of scamped work, of a humour that only plays over the surface of things—a humour which sees only the comic side that anybody might see. And because I cannot defend him, I say no more. Lever is certainly not a great humorist, but he is delightful company.

One may mention in passing the excursions into broad comedy of another brilliant Irishman—Le Fanu's short stories in the 'Purcell Papers,' such as the 'Quare Gander,' or 'Billy Molowney's Taste of Love and Glory.' These are good examples of a particular literary type—the humorous anecdote—in which Irish humour has always been fertile, and of which the *ne plus ultra* is Sir Samuel Ferguson's magnificent squib in Blackwood, 'Father Tom and

the Pope.' Everybody knows the merits of that story, its inexhaustible fertility of comparison, its dialectic ingenuity, its joviality, its drollery, its Rabelaisian laughter. But, after all, the highest type of humour is humour applying itself to the facts of life, and this is burlesque humour squandering itself in riot upon a delectable fiction. Humour is a great deal more than a plaything; it is a force, a weapon—at once sword and shield. If there is to be an art of literature in Ireland that can be called national, it cannot afford to devote humour solely to the production of trifles. 'Father Tom' is a trifle, a splendid toy; and what is more, a trifle wrought in a moment of ease by perhaps the most serious and conscientious artist that ever made a contribution to the small body of real Irish literature in the tongue that is now native to the majority of Irishmen.

Of contemporaries, with one exception, I do not propose to speak at any length, nor can I hope that my review will be complete. There is first and foremost Miss Barlow, a lady whose work is so gentle, so unassuming, that one hears little of it in the rush and flare of these strident times, but who will be heard and listened to with fresh emotion as the stream is heard when the scream and rattle of a railway train have passed away into silence. Is she a humorist? Not in the sense of provoking laughter—and yet the things that she sees and loves and dwells on would be unbearable if they were not seen through a delicate mist of mirth. The daily life of people at continual handgrips with starvation, their little points of honour, their little questions of precedence, the infinite generosity that concerns itself with the expenditure of sixpence, the odd shifts they resort to that a gift may not have the appearance of charity,—all these are set down with a tenderness of laughter that is peculiarly and distinctively Irish.

Yet, though we may find a finer quality of humour in those writers who do not seek to raise a laugh—for instance, the subtle pervasive humour in Mr. Yeats's 'Celtic Twilight'—still there are few greater attractions than that of open healthy laughter of the contagious sort; and it would be black ingratitude not to pay tribute to the authoresses of 'Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.'—a book that no decorous person can read with comfort in a railway carriage. These ladies have the keenest eye for the obvious humours of Irish life, they have abundance of animal spirits, and they have that knack at fluent description embroidered with a wealth of

picturesque details that is shared by hundreds of peasants in Ireland, but is very rare indeed on the printed page. And, mingling with the broad farce there is a deal of excellent comedy—for instance, in the person of old Mrs. Knox of Aussolas. But there is the same point to insist on—and since these witty and delightful ladies have already the applause of all the world one insists less unwillingly—this kind of thing, admirable as it is, will not redeem Irish humour from the reproach of trifling. It is absolutely distinct in kind from Miss Barlow's—absolutely distinct because so much lower in aim. The humour that more than any other quality makes the greatness of English literature stir more faculties than the simple one of laughter.

There is indeed a literature which, if not always exactly humorous, is closely allied to it—the literature of satire and invective; and in this Ireland has always been prolific. In the days of the old kings the order of bards had grown so prolific, that they comprised a third of the whole population, and they devoted themselves with such talent and zeal to the task of invective that no man could live in peace, and the country cried out against them, and there was talk of suppressing the whole order. The king spared them on condition that they would mend their manners. We have those bards still, but nowadays we call them politicians and journalists; and frankly I think we are ripe for another intervention, if only in the interests of literature. So much good talent goes to waste in bad words; and, moreover, an observance of the decencies is always salutary for style. And it seems that as the years have gone on, humour has diminished in Irish politics, while bad humour has increased; and therefore I leave alone any attempt to survey the humour of the orators, though Curran tempts one at the beginning and Mr. Healy at the close. Of purely literary satire there has been little enough, apart from its emergence in the novel; but there is one example which deserves to be recalled. I cannot profess enthusiasm for Thomas Moore, but neither can I go back on the popular estimate so completely as a recent critic who would claim literary rank for him rather in virtue of the 'Fudge Family' than of the Irish Melodies. That satire does not seem to get beyond a thin brilliancy; it is clever, but no more. Still, there are passages in it which cannot be read without enjoyment; and one quotation may be permitted, since it puts with perfect distinctness what it is always permissible to put—the English case against Ireland.

I'm a plain man who speak the truth,
 And trust you'll think me not uncivil
 When I declare that from my youth
 I've wished your country at the devil.
 Nor can I doubt indeed from all
 I've heard of your high patriot fame,
 From every word your lips let fall,
 That you most truly wish the same.
 It plagues one's life out ; thirty years
 Have I had dinning in my ears—
 Ireland wants this and that and t'other ;
 And to this hour one nothing hears
 But the same vile eternal bother.
 While of those countless things she wanted,
 Thank God but little has been granted.

The list of writers of humorous verse in Ireland is a long one, but a catalogue of ephemera. Even Father Prout at this time of day is little more than a dried specimen labelled for reference, or at most preserved in vitality by the immortal 'Groves of Blarney.' But neither that work, nor even 'The Night before Larry was stretched,' nor Le Fanu's ballad of 'Shemus O'Brien,' can rank altogether as literature. About the humorous song I need only say that, so far as my experience goes, there is one, and one only, which a person with no taste for music and some taste for literature can hear frequently with pleasure, and that song of course is 'Father O'Flynn.' To recall the delightful ingenuity and the nimble wit shown by another Irishman of the same family in the 'Hawarden Horace,' and in a lesser degree by Mr. Godley in his 'Musa Frivola,' leads naturally to the inquiry why humour from Aristophanes to Carlyle has always preferred the side of reaction—a question that would need an essay, or a volume, all to itself.

But the central question is after all why in a race where humour is so preponderant in the racial temperament does so little of the element crystallise itself in literature. There is humour, no doubt, of a very individual kind in Mr. Frank Mathew's 'Wood of the Brambles'; there is humour as well as a profusion of wit in Mr. Ashe King's 'Wearing of the Green'; there is humour along with the true lyrical gift in Moira O'Neill's 'Songs of the Glens of Antrim.' How should it be otherwise, when in Ireland a collector like Mr. Michael Macdonagh can go about and gather stray fragments that testify sometimes to a delightful wit, sometimes merely to a natural oddity of mind, or a quaint turning of the phrase, in the person who is the subject of his story, but

testify always to Mr. Macdonagh's own swift appreciation of the humorous side. But all this is very different from what I look for and do not find—the faculty of humorous creation. Humour ranks with the water power as one of the great undeveloped resources of the country. Something indeed has been done in the past with the river of laughter that almost every Irish person has flowing in his heart; but infinitely more might be done if these rivers were put in harness.

And in one branch of literature it is being done already—in the drama. I shall not dwell here on Dr. Douglas Hyde's little one-act comedy in Gaelic—'Casadh an Tsugáin' ('The Twisting of the Rope')—played last autumn in Dublin, further than to say that it was an admirable piece of truly poetic humour. But, considering English work alone, take away two Irish names from the field of modern comedy, and you have uncommonly little for which literary merit can be claimed. It is difficult to discuss Mr. Wilde's work, but its quality is scarcely disputed. There is the more reason to dwell on Mr. Bernard Shaw's plays, because they have not as yet been fully accepted by that queer folk, the theatre-going public. But I never yet heard of anyone who saw 'You Never can Tell,' and was not amused by it. That was a farce, no doubt, but a farce which appealed to emotions less elementary than those which are touched by the spectacle of a man sitting down by accident on his hat; it was a farce of intellectual absurdities, of grotesque situations arising out of perversities of character and opinion; a farce that you could laugh at without a loss of self-respect. But it is rather by 'Candida' that Mr. Shaw should be judged, and 'Candida' is by far the most interesting modern comedy that I have read or seen. It is not popular, apparently, but for a very good reason: Mr. Shaw's humour is too serious. His humour is a strong solvent, and one of the many things about which this humorist is in deadly earnest is the fetish worship of tradition. To that he persists in applying—in 'Candida' as in half a dozen other plays—the ordeal by laughter—an ordeal which every human institution is bound to face. 'Candida' will not only make people laugh, it will make them think; and it is not easy to induce the public to think after dinner on unaccustomed lines. They will laugh when they have been used to laugh, weep when they have been used to weep; but if you ask them to laugh when they expect to weep, or *vice versâ*, the public will resent the proceeding. The original

humorist, like every other original artist, has got slowly and laboriously to convert his public before he can convince them of his right to find tears and laughter where he can.

Whatever Mr. Shaw touches, whether it be the half-hysterical impulse that sometimes passes current for heroism, as in 'Arms and the Man,' or, as in the 'Devil's Disciple,' the conventional picturesqueness of a Don Juan—that maker of laws, breaker of hearts, so familiar with the limelight, so unused to the illumination by laughter, who finds himself in the long run deplorably stigmatised as a saint—there is a flood of light let in upon all manner of traditional poses, literary insincerities that have crept into life. There are few things of more value in a commonwealth than such a searching faculty of laughter. Like Sheridan, Mr. Shaw lives in England, and uses his comic gift for the most part on subjects suggested to him by English conditions of life, but with a strength of intellectual purpose that Sheridan never possessed. Irishmen may wish that he found his material in Ireland; we should then have plays much more amusing than Mr. Moore's 'Bending of the Bough,' though that also may be welcomed as an attempt, successful or not, toward the serious employment of humour.

But an artist must take what his hand finds, and there is no work in the world more full of the Scottish spirit or the Scottish humour than Carlyle's 'French Revolution.' If it be asked whether Mr. Shaw's humour is typically Irish, I must reply by another question: 'Could his plays have conceivably been written by any but an Irishman?'

Is there, in fact, a distinctively Irish humour? In a sense, yes, no doubt, just as the English humour is of a different quality from the Greek or the French. But nobody wants to pin down English humour to the formula of a definition; no one wants to say, *Thus far shalt thou go, and beyond that shalt cease to be English.* Moreover, a leading characteristic of the Irish type is just its variety—its continual deviation from the normal. How, then, to find a description that will apply to a certain quality of mind throughout a variable race; that quality being in its essence the most complete expression of an individuality, in its difference from other individualities, since a man's humour is the most individual thing about him? Description is perhaps more possible than definition. One may say that the Irish humour is kindly and lavish; that it tends to express itself in an exuberance of

phrase, a wild riot of comparisons; that it amplifies rather than retrenches, finding its effects by an accumulation of traits, and not by a concentration. The vernacular Irish literature is there to prove that Irish fancy gives too much rather than too little. One may observe, again, that a nation laughs habitually over its besetting weakness; and if the French find their mirth by preference in dubious adventures, it cannot be denied that much Irish humour has a pronounced alcoholic flavour. But it is better neither to define nor to describe; there is more harmful misunderstanding caused by setting down this or that quality, this or that person, as typically French, typically English, typically Irish, than by any other fallacy; and we Irish have suffered peculiarly by the notion that the typical Irishman is the funny man of the empire. What I would permit myself to assert is, first, that the truest humour is not just the light mirth that comes easily from the lips—that, in the hackneyed phrase, bubbles over spontaneously—but is the expression of deep feeling and deep thought, made possible by deep study of the means to express it; and secondly, that literature, which through the earlier part of this century never received in Ireland the laborious brooding care without which no considerable work of art is possible, now receives increasingly the artist's labour; and consequently that among our later humorists we find a faculty of mirth that lies deeper, reaches farther, judges more subtly, calls into light a wider complex of relations. After all, laughter is the most distinctive faculty of man; and I submit that, so far as literature shows, we Irish can better afford to be judged by our laughter now than a century ago.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

THE
ENGLISH FRIENDS OF MARIE ANTOINETTE.

ON a certain day in the year 1773 a naïve Dauphiness of eighteen, with her impulsive pen and her uncertain orthography, was writing to her mother in Vienna, 'The English will always be bad neighbours to France, and the sea has never stopped them doing her a great deal of harm.' Marie Antoinette did not know then that in the heyday of her youth and pleasure these 'bad neighbours' would be among the dearest, and not the most harmful, of her friends; that she would borrow from England its modes, its foibles, its pastimes; and that in the latter days of her bitter pilgrimage English men and women would sacrifice fortune and face death to save her.

Perhaps many English people themselves do not know the part their countrymen played in the wildest drama in history.

When the future Dauphine was gaily learning nothing in an Imperial schoolroom—a little blue-eyed, fair-haired, eight-year-old Archduchess—in the salon of the Prince de Conti at Paris Anglomania was springing to birth.

Before she came a bride to Versailles and captivated the foul old King by a purer charm than he had ever known, Louis XV. had looked askance at the new craze.

'What have you been doing across the Channel?' he asked Laurengais, one of the most horsey of the Anglomaniacs.

'Sire, j'apprenais à penser.'

'Les chevaux, monsieur?'

There was a famous picture by Olivier presently called 'Thé à l'anglaise' (still preserved at Versailles), and containing portraits of all the principal Anglomaniacs of the day.

In the very same year when she had so positively, properly, and summarily dismissed the British nation for ever and ever as 'bad neighbours,' the little Dauphiness was writing to mollify strict and improving Mama by the encouraging statement that she was reading Hume's 'History of England,' 'which appears to me exceedingly interesting, though one must always bear in mind that the writer is a Protestant.'

But it was not until she was a 'petite reine de vingt ans,' and Louis XVI. gave her Trianon, that Marie Antoinette developed her 'passion for the English.' Trianon was her new toy—her idol—to take the place of the child for which her girlish heart had longed—and was not to have for too many dangerous years. It was to be unique, wonderful, incomparable! It was to be unlike any other garden in France. No prim, pinked out, artificial borders here! An English garden, careless and sweet-smelling: lilacs and nightingales, roses and lavender, 'ses arbres poussant sans contrainte . . . ses prairies, son imprévu'—the emblem of English freedom to do what one likes, even to the alarming extent of running about in a white frock, a muslin fichu, and a straw hat tied under the most wilful chin in the world. The lovely *jardinière* imported English gardeners, English trees, English shrubs. That gay brother-in-law, d'Artois, himself in an advanced stage of Anglomania, brought her English syringas and encouraged her in this new craze, as he had encouraged her in other crazes, far more imprudent.

Exotic plants mingled their scents with the May trees and laburnums of an English home. Here there should be room for all—the truly British spirit of tolerance which a future, graver Marie Antoinette feared had rendered the proud little island so lawless and independent as to be quite unsafe for my brother, the Emperor Joseph, to travel in! But at Trianon it should be English freedom with French safety. Nature, light, life, air, sunshine! A girl who could run about and enjoy herself, milk the cows, feed the pigeons, water the flowers. 'The Queen is entirely occupied with her English garden at Trianon,' wrote Mercy-Argenteau, 'which would be very innocent if it left room for more serious ideas.' Very innocent—if——! Was not that the keynote of all the Queen's young life? Very innocent—if—— If her world were not so vile that it put its own vile construction on everything, judged her by itself, and in the Garden saw only Temptation and the Serpent.

What wonder if soon the English garden seemed incomplete without English friends? 'The Queen particularly distinguishes English ladies,' wrote that old woman, Mercy-Argenteau, again. The Queen, in fact, had already taken a certain Lady Ailesbury, related to Horace Walpole, to her impulsive heart. Then it was 'good Lady Spencer,' introduced by the Princess de Lamballe, who must be always in the royal presence and the confidante of

all the royal girlish secrets. This dear Englishwoman is by no means to await in the antechamber a formal introduction into the Presence with the common herd! She is to have the special *entrée* of the private apartments at Versailles. Marie Antoinette had 'an enthusiasm' for her—overwhelmed the calm British matron with her warm, demonstrative, foreign affection. The friendship was very youthful and most innocent. In the chronicles of that cruel day it is written that it did not escape 'much censure.'

Presently the Queen, not satisfied with running about the Trianon English garden with her English friends, made a rule that at her 'bals de la reine' the English women should be admitted as spectators without necessarily having first been presented at Court. A number of 'strangers of that nation' were always grouped round the Queen at these parties. In the background her French subjects, not a little jealous and spiteful, whispered what Mercy primly phrased as 'unjust and misplaced remarks.' Marie Antoinette would not have been her own open, impulsive, imprudent, youthful self if she had taken the slightest trouble to conceal her predilection for the delightful nation she had just discovered. Besides, they danced so well! And what could a ball possibly mean to a queen of twenty but dancing? At the end of the evening 'les gens qui avaient abandonné la danse se permettaient une colonne anglaise, et la reine s'en mêlait.' Across the century, the Conciergerie, and the guillotine, one can still see that brilliant girlish face, with its morning tints no painter could reproduce—laughing lips, shining eyes, careless heart—the earliest Marie Antoinette.

She was 'folle' soon (in two senses, alas!) of another Englishwoman—Lady Sarah Bunbury. She would have been some other than the volatile girl Maria Theresa and Mercy scolded and warned, if she had sifted the wheat from the chaff in her acquaintance, and loved wisely, but not too well. To be sure, she gave up her friendship for Lady Sarah directly she knew of the Englishwoman's infamous relations with the Duc de Lauzun. But it was too late. Her enemies had fixed another blot on the fair page of her good name. It was partly her own folly and partly the low public opinion of her age which permitted her to continue the acquaintance of that fatuous scoundrel the Duc himself, and to meet him every night in the salon of the Guéménée to talk over their mutual affection—the English. Was it also at the Prince de Guéménée's that Marie Antoinette first met his Irish mistress, Madame Dillon, and

conceived for her that impulsive friendship which supplanted the royal devotion to Madame de Lamballe and preceded the fatal passion for the Polignacs? Madame Dillon had been a Miss Roth, sweet-faced, sweet-voiced, Irish-eyed. She married one of her own countrymen, of a great clan of which Marie Antoinette was to know more hereafter: and loved the Prince de Guéménée with an attachment which lasted twelve years and was broken only by death. Perhaps it *was* platonic, as some said. It lasted so long, there must have been good salt in it to keep it from decay. But public opinion assumed its guilt: and the reputation of her friend injured the Queen's. But it was not until the grasping covetousness of the scheming mother, Mrs. Roth, profiting by her daughter's position to ask innumerable benefits for her relations, disgusted even the generosity of Marie Antoinette, that she renounced Madame Dillon in favour of a yet more dangerous affection.

Marie Antoinette's friendships were naturally not confined to English women. She soon *rafolléd* of everything English. English stuffs, English furniture, English horses, English 'biliard.' Grimm, in his 'Correspondance Littéraire,' declared that now the only language studied and taught, and the only books translated in France, were English. 'Anglomania and its alarming progress menace equally our gallantry, our social charm, and our taste in dress.' Horace Walpole recorded the publication of a book giving the history of the craze, and called 'Anglomanie.'

When Madame de Polignac was for the time being the one woman in the world for her Majesty, the Queen met at her house Lord Wentworth, and, for a time, the famous Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Lord Stormont, the English Ambassador, the little Queen found of 'un fort bon ton,' and added in a letter to her mother, with a little naïve touch, that he seemed pleased to give her news of 'my dear people' at Vienna, from where he had just come. He must be of her Monday balls! 'I have told M. Mercy to engage him.' One wonders if he went and heard the royal hostess play on that 'dear harp' (also an English importation) 'not so badly for a queen.'

In 1775 a French 'Newmarckt' was started at Paris. Marie Antoinette had already fallen in love with those *chasses à cheval à l'anglaise*. It was so delightful to defy that tedious Court etiquette, which thought it much less wicked to transgress the Decalogue than a *convenance*. Could there be real iniquity in this Queen of twenty, romping and riding and enjoying herself

like a squire's daughter in England? Brother-in-law d'Artois was always at these *chasses*, flaunting his English equipages in the face of heavy brother Louis, who disliked this Anglomania not a little, and made a point of conducting *his* sport à la française.

At the very 'Newmarckt' in question the Queen, 'belle comme le jour,' must needs have up Lauzun's little English jockey to congratulate him on his victory. She felicitated the Duc himself, with that girlish and spontaneous charm of manner which was hers alone.

The 'Correspondance Secrète' of the day speaks of the infinite grace with which she consoled the vanquished. There was no harm! There could have been no harm! Alas! for a French Queen, if few innocent pleasures were lawful, hardly one was expedient.

A year later she was writing to her mother that there was one remedy for all English complaints—to come to Paris. And Mercy was telling Maria Theresa of the 'senseless amusements' to which the Queen was given up, with her English friends. There was a certain young Fitzgerald, with all the daredevil, dogged courage of his British race, who was of the Queen's hunting parties, and took very high fences to her especial delight and amusement. Marie Antoinette encouraged him to go higher and higher. She was quite gay and heedless and enjoying herself. She did so want to be made to laugh! This Englishman ('aussi déterminé qu'étourdi') would do anything for the pleasure and smiles of such a Queen. For her it was a new sensation—just dangerous enough to be exciting. When the Comte d'Artois dared the Englishman to leap over another horse on his own, her laughing Majesty was frightened a little and drew back. D'Artois insisted. Fitzgerald agreed: with the inevitable result of cuts, bruises, and a concussion. Such an amusement, said Mercy very justly, was not fit to have even the seeming sanction of a Queen.

When the Court was at Fontainebleau in the December of 1776, the dulness of the country was enlivened by English horseracing—this time with its inevitable consequence—betting. D'Artois lost heavily. Mercy commented again bitterly on the disorder occasioned by these 'English imitations.' The Queen herself, when she had stopped laughing, looked up with frightened eyes, as it were, and conceded that the amusement was 'unsuitable.' It finished in a duel between Fitzgerald and another man, in which

Fitzgerald was badly hurt. All Marie Antoinette's pleasures ended thus—suddenly and in gloom. Her share in the English horseracing was not very wicked, perhaps; it was only unwise. For her, a folly was worse than a crime.

She forgot that trouble—if trouble it might be called—soon enough; and went laughing back to Trianon. What a bright world it was, to be sure, for all Mercy's grave old face and Mama's upbraidings from Vienna! The Anglomania was at its zenith. At her *bals de la reine* the English were more to the fore than ever.

Horace Walpole had been introduced to her at one of them. 'It was impossible to see anything but the Queen,' he wrote. 'Hebes and Floras, Helens and Graces' paled before that loveliness. 'For beauty, I saw none or the Queen effaced the rest.' 'Dressed in silver with few diamonds and feathers much lower than the monument'—the behaviour of her youthful Majesty was 'as easy as divine.' 'They say she does not dance in time, but then it is wrong to dance in time.'

The words paint the picture in those living colours which no time can fade.

Of the *bals* were also the 'duc Dorset, cavalier anglais,' who succeeded Lord Stormont as English Ambassador, and whom Mercy mentioned as particularly well received by the Queen; and my Lord George Conway. Marie Antoinette met them constantly, too, at the Duchesse de Polignac's. A Mr. Ellis, the writer of 'pretty verses' and the friend of Canning and Sir Walter Scott, was 'a favourite' at Versailles. Later, at the Salon of Madame d'Ossun, Marie Antoinette began to dance 'écossaises' with that 'gay Gordon' George, Marquis of Huntly, afterwards Lord Strathavon. Strathavon was a boy in his early twenties, and on Marie Antoinette motherhood had laid its tender and sobering hand. Someone, whom in her warm-heartedness she had 'overwhelmed with benefits,' made on the incident a shameful couplet, which ran through angry Paris like a firebrand. Lord Conway and the 'duc Dorset' were also given to her as lovers. Some fools in high places (who spared her feelings to lose her life) bought the detractor's silence, and so set a premium on libel and made calumny of the Queen an easy source of income.

One night, when the 'écossaises' were over, the privileged Strathavon presented to his brilliant mistress a countryman of his own, one Colonel Quentin Crawford, or Craufurd, a nabob from

Manilla, enormously wealthy, about seven or eight and forty years old, with a passion for play, a *penchant* for the fine arts, and a reputation a little worse than doubtful. Crawford was born at Kilwinick and had made his money in the East India Company. He came to Paris in 1780. 'Make your fortune where you like but spend it in Paris,' was his motto, which he was never tired of repeating. He was a collector of books, statues, pictures. He had already begun his famous gallery of portraits of the sovereigns of Europe. He must have been a man of some considerable personal attractions, of cultivated mind, of easy courage, and with that delight in society which is the best help towards being socially delightful, when Strathavon presented him to Marie Antoinette.

How little either Queen or commoner could forecast at that light moment the deadly earnestness of their future connection with each other!

The Queen received the Colonel immediately into her flattering 'intimité.' He was English! That was sufficient in itself. How long did it take them to discover their mutual passion for high play? One authority, indeed, has it that the gambling craze itself brought about the acquaintance. The Queen heard of Colonel 'Crawford's' wealth (she wrote his name thus in a pitiful letter written to one Fersen a very few years later); sent him an intimation that he was to stake 200,000 gold pieces at cards at Trianon; made Strathavon introduce him; played, with the Colonel the winner of 30,000,000 francs. It may not have been true at all. The air of the English garden, like the air of all Paris, was hot with lies. It may have been half true. A few noughts on to the end of those figures would be light as nothing on the conscience of traducers—and make the story much more exciting! That Colonel Crawford was an inveterate gambler, there seems no reason for doubting. In 1787 he was fetched home from cards at the British Embassy at nine o'clock in the morning by his mistress Mrs. Sullivan, who had her own part to play hereafter as an English friend of the Queen.

When was it Marie Antoinette first met that 'beau Dillon,' who comes out of the shadows of history gay, handsome, Irish, and penniless—not the least romantic figure of that laughing, motley group, the *société intime*? Edward Dillon was descended from the Earls of Roscommon, and had all the plausible Irish charm of manner, with not a little fatuous and boyish self-conceit, and that culture and polish only to be gained by a youth spent

in eighteenth-century France. His father had settled at Bordeaux. He had been a Dublin banker, and in France took to the wine trade. Birth not very noble it seems—for all those Earls of Roscommon. But Edward was much too delightful to need aristocratic parentage. Directly he came to Paris his friends, truly French, created him Comte because, if he was not titled, he was so charming that he certainly ought to have been! His very enemies spoke of him as 'le beau.' Only Wraxall, in his *Memoirs*, denies his right to that agreeable title, and says that the only claim he had to it was that he was a good deal taller than my Lord Wentworth and other Englishmen of the Queen's set.

Edward was very soon made gentleman of the bedchamber to the Comte d'Artois. After that his introduction to the Queen was easy. He must have been one or two and twenty when it took place, and her Majesty three or four years older. They both loved laughter and pleasure, lived in the present and foresaw no future. Both were handsome and charming. What wonder that they should charm each other? Edward danced divinely, talked divinely no doubt, and had the further irresistible and crowning grace of being English. (English and Irish in the eyes of a Frenchwoman were all one thing, at that day at least.) At a *bal de la reine* when they had been dancing together, the impulsive Queen suddenly stopped short and said to her handsome partner, 'Feel how my heart is beating!'

Dillon put his hand on her Majesty's bodice.

'Only listen!' the King called out to him from the other end of the room. 'You must be content to take her Majesty's word on trust!'

The anecdote has not the ring of truth somehow. The King was too apt. He was never so ready, at least, when his crown, his neck, and his kingdom hung on his readiness. But if the anecdote be true it may be conceded, with the Page of the Backstairs who tells it, that it was only a *naïveté*. The same very scandalous authority asserts that if the Queen treated *le beau Dillon* for an instant with 'bonté,' she drew back again at once, disgusted by his airs of fatuity. Another chronicler, yet more scandalous, could not find worse to say of the friendship than that the Queen's pretty open face 'se reprintanisait' when Edward Dillon 'entraît au bal.' Wraxall added that she gave the handsome boy imprudent marks of her favour. Every mark of favour—a smile, a flush, a light in her eyes—was imprudent for Marie Antoinette. Madame

de Campan says Edward Dillon was one of the many persons who, if the Queen spoke to them at cards, or out hunting, was immediately assigned to her as her lover.

But from the testimony of her enemies alone the complete innocence of her relationship with Edward Dillon, the dearest of her Englishmen, is proved to the hilt.

There was another Dillon—Arthur—gambler and *bon vivant*—related, but not nearly related, to Edward—who was also of the *intimité* for a while and basked in the sunshine of royal favour.

When Arthur broke his arm out hunting both their Majesties honoured him by watching the bone being set.

There were a certain Mr. and Mrs. Swinburne, of an old English north-country family, refined and cultivated much above the usual English squires and squiressees of their day, friends of Maria Theresa, and for whom Marie Antoinette, with that royal power which had so short a time to live, had procured a grant of all the uncultivated lands in the island of St. Vincent, valued at 30,000*l.* Mrs. Swinburne's friendship was soon to be put to searching proof.

One may see as in a picture the English garden at Trianon, in the lavish bloom of its midsummer, the sun high in heaven, and the sky the deep, still blue which makes men think joy, youth and June, eternal. Here are 'good Lady Spencer,' and Lady Sarah Bunbury who deserved the adjective so little. Down a scented path comes the impulsive Queen with her girlish arm thrust into Madame Dillon's. Within, in that little Trianon—where one may pause to-day and conjure from the dead for a moment the brilliant company who laughed there then—is Colonel Crawford, always ready for play, and the 'gay Gordon,' Strathavon, for a dance. Here is the dairy where the Queen played rusticity: and the 'duc Dorset' and my Lord George Conway were proud to be cowmen to such a milkmaid. The 'beau Dillon' brings here perhaps, presently, his English wife, the daughter of Sir Robert Harland. Wife or no wife, the Count is always 'le beau' and conscious of it—vain, gay, Irish, irresistible—the most picturesque figure the English garden knew.

It took the thunderclap of the Revolution to wake the Queen from the day-dream of joy she had dreamt there. She was sitting in one of its arbours—the summer was over and a dripping October lay chill on the English flowers—when she received the news of the advance of the ten thousand women upon Versailles. Many

of her English friends had already left her. Some had parted from her in the heyday of her youth and gaiety—anticipating no trouble—concluding that an order of things which had lasted so long must needs last for ever. Lord Stormont had been recalled several years before. The ‘duc Dorset’ had remained in Paris till after the fall of the Bastille. Most of the friends fade out of the picture with the sunshine. They could not have saved her by staying perhaps, and must infallibly have lost themselves. Very few were false. Arthur Dillon indeed became a republican general; but even he lost his life at last, because he would not proceed to extreme measures. Horace Walpole followed the Queen’s fate with trembling hope and fear, and, at last, with a passionate dread and horror foreign to his character. The ‘beau Dillon’ emigrated with the Comte d’Artois. Perhaps even he could have done no good had he stayed. Or, since his name had been odiously coupled with the Queen’s, he could only have done her harm. In the emigration, he formed, with his brothers and other relatives of his clan, a Dillon regiment. His English wife was dead. He died to fame, too, for a while. There is no more record of where he was than of what he felt, when his Royal Mistress was playing her bitter tragedy, royally, to the end. In 1814 he was in London, dining at Madame de Staël’s, to meet Miss Berry, the friend of Horace Walpole. After the battle of Waterloo he returned to Paris. What a new, strange world he must have found! Did he go back to Trianon, and there, grave and old, walk in the ruined garden where he had laughed with a Queen, and, pausing, remember the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that was still?

He died two years after the accession of Queen Victoria. He was in his day General, traveller, diplomatist, as well as a most cultivated man of the world. But his only real claim to fame is as an English friend of the Queen—the enthusiast whom a contemporary described as anxious to purchase anyhow, at any price, an obscure and costly book by Linguet—only because its title was ‘Antoinette.’

In the dark days which followed the Insurrection of Women there was at least one loyal Englishwoman about the Queen. A year before it took place Mrs. Swinburne had been warned by her shoemaker of the intended advance upon Versailles. She repeated what she had heard to the wife of the Marshal de Beauvau. But France had not heeded a century of grimmer warnings. Who would pay attention to this? In the May after

the event, Mrs. Swinburne wrote to her husband to tell him that their son Harry had been made one of the royal pages, and that she had had an interview with the Queen.

The two women sat and talked—friends. The brilliancy which had made Marie Antoinette's like no other beauty had faded. Her son, the first Dauphin, was sick unto death. That thought was uppermost in her mind. Even the state of the country seemed nothing to the mother of a dying child.

'You come at an unlucky moment, Madame,' she said. 'Vous ne me trouverez point gaie, j'ai beaucoup sur le cœur.'

She asked after Mrs. Swinburne's other children, and promised that Harry should be under her special care.

'But I fear that now I can be of little use to you. If times get better, you know that I shall not forget my friends.'

That was her only allusion to public affairs.

Even the shadow of the awful future did not lie so dark on the heart of the woman who had danced away her youth at Trianon, and thought joy her empire on which the sun would never set, as the dying of her sickly and crippled son. All her vivacity and impulsive charm had gone with her summer. When Mrs. Swinburne left the royal presence, she wept.

Presently she wrote to England of the Dauphin's death. 'A bitter stroke' for the Queen. 'She receives no one.'

Later in that fatal year, Mrs. Swinburne was hoping that the removal of the royal family to the Tuileries would permanently quiet the people; and could leave her son in Paris believing in a revolt, not a revolution.

Nevertheless, before she went she begged a last interview of the Queen. Marie Antoinette received her with a kindness which had never varied, promised again to look after Harry, and wished her friends all happiness.

'Vous allez dans votre heureuse famille, dans un pays tranquille où la calomnie et la cruauté ne vous poursuivront pas. Je dois vous porter envie.'

The Englishwoman tried to utter the usual assurances of times changing and the return of happiness and prosperity.

The Queen only shook her head. For others, perhaps. For a new France, a new order, a new world. But for her and hers—never.

There was something in the desolation of the action—in the fatal resignation to fate—which stirred in the Englishwoman a passionate pity and courage, and she unfolded her plan that the

Queen should escape to England as her maid, with the passport already made out, and leaving the maid to return to her home in St. Germain.

The Queen thanked her and 'smiled faintly.' She would never leave her children, she said. She had had other offers of the same sort. 'Besides,' and she looked round, 'si je voulais, cela ne se pourroit pas, il y a trop d'espions.'

Spies! False friends, traitors as there had been traitors amongst the lilies and roses of her English garden, liars, who had whispered the lie which is part of the truth and ever the basest of lies, who had encouraged her in folly and then turned the folly to her destruction—if her English friends did not all stand by her in her hour of need, at least not one of them was as base as this.

Mrs. Swinburne's pleadings were of no avail. She left with that fatal foreboding at her heart, which was also in the Queen's. At Boulogne her carriage was stopped by a 'horde of poissardes,' who mistook her for the mistress of the Duke of Orleans escaping to England. She looked out of the window and replied: 'Mesdames, je ne suis ni jeune ni jolie: M. le Duc auroit-il si mauvais goût?' And they laughed and, muttering 'Pas si mal, pas si mal,' let her go. But if beside her had been the maid with the features and bearing of 'the Austrian' what chance of escape would there have been for *her*? Fate would have been against Marie Antoinette then, as it was against her for ever.

She did not forget her promises with regard to Harry, the page. But she could do so little! Or worse than little—inspire an affection which *must* bring ruin. Young Swinburne was the first of his nation to occupy the post. It had once been an honourable and lucrative one—a pass to rich appointments. Leaving the theatre one night which he had attended with the Queen, the mob without set on the Royalists, dragged them in the gutter, pelted them with mud and snow and forced them to shout 'Vive la nation.' Harry was wounded in the head. His parents sent for him to England. The Swinburnes died out of Marie Antoinette's destiny, though not, it may be safely concluded, from a heart which never knew that meanest of all vices, ingratitude.

While in her English home, 'across the heads of children,' and in her glowing fire, the Englishwoman may sometimes have seen pictures of her royal friend; and, herself so far off and safe,

have hidden her eyes in a little daughter's curls to shut out a grim vision of the other mother who knew her son to be a prisoner with Simon.

When the royal family were moved to the Feuillants, another English woman, the pretty and charming Lady Sutherland, wife of the Ambassador, came to their very practical aid. The little Dauphin had only the clothes he stood up in. Her ladyship lent an outfit belonging to her own little son. When they got back to London—they had to appear before the Revolutionary tribunal at Abbeville, but were let off—his youthful lordship was quite at a loss when he noted the absence of a cannon in the streets, and inquired of the Attorney-General where it was; but seeing some points of rails higher than others, noted with satisfaction, 'Then there *are* pikes here!'

There were but few English left in France now. The gay Paris which had been full of them, which had talked their language, aped their manners, and learnt their follies, had become a City of Destruction. But now here, now there, to-day in Brussels, to-morrow in London, the third day in Paris, working, plotting, planning, spending his vast fortune, inimitably cool, cautious and resourceful, there was still one Englishman who thought even yet he might save the Queen.

Colonel Crawford is pre-eminently one of those persons 'whose greatness, not whose littleness, concerns mankind.'

Gambler and spendthrift, free-liver and, it is to be feared, too often evil thinker, whose scandalous domestic relations amused a vast circle of English friends (very few of them being in a position themselves to treat such irregularity severely), posterity need only look at the man's courage and self-sacrifice, and at the fact that, of all those English friends of the Queen who had played with her in sunshine, he stood staunchest and longest by her to breast the storm.

When did he meet Count Axel de Fersen, that Bayard of the French Revolution, the stainless gentleman without fear or reproach, who had left Marie Antoinette in prosperity lest his staying should give malicious tongues food for malice and blot the white page of her honour, and who returned to her in her dark hour, to lay soul and life at her feet? Could it have been at Trianon—across the card-table—where Colonel Crawford's craze encouraged Marie Antoinette in the same perilous folly? The two men could have had little in common then.

They never had anything in common perhaps but that desperate resolve to save the Queen. The brotherhood of peril made them friends, and united them in one of the most thrilling episodes in history.

The escape of the royal family from France must have been in Fersen's mind at the beginning of the year 1791. The tiger mob of Paris had tasted human blood: and if the blood were royal would it be less sweet for that? How the plan was hatched, no one knows. Colonel Crawford had living with him in Paris his mistress, Mrs. Sullivan, whom some authorities called English, and some Italian. (She was the alleged ex-wife of the King of Würtemberg, and, to be, grandmother of Comte d'Orsay.) A faithful English valet, Tom Sayer, and Crawford's *surveillante de la maison*, a Mme. Toscani, were among the *dramatis personæ*, and trusted. Some authorities have thought there was also a Baroness de Korff, 'une dame courlandaise' of position, devoted both to Fersen and the Queen. Others have concluded that no such person existed, and that Madame de Korff was only the *nom de guerre* of Mrs. Sullivan.

It was, anyhow, Mrs. Sullivan, 'of the Rue de Clichy,' who was employed to procure the great, fatal, lumbering *berline*, the last hope of the Bourbons. She represented herself to be the Baroness de Korff. The *berline* was to be of great size to accommodate nine persons, six inside and three on the box. The *dame courlandaise* was of luxurious tastes, too, and must have, forsooth, her carriage fitted with a cabinet of 'ivory and rose-wood' to hold her jewels and her perfumes. She was for ever bothering the maker, Jean Louis, to get on with his work. She paid part of the bill in advance. With her, to that coach-builder's yard, must have come now and again, a thousand times more impatient than herself, a certain long-faced, bright-eyed Swedish officer and an Englishman, tanned by Indian suns, who talked French like a Frenchman. Would it never be finished? The day *did* come, all too slowly. Before then, the active Baroness de Korff had procured a passport for herself, two children, a governess and servant: lost the passport with great promptitude, and procured another.

Spring returned—the return of hope—the beginning of a new time. Colonel Crawford was now still more constantly backwards and forwards between London, Brussels and the Rue de Clichy. 'In England,' it is said, 'people not only talked of the flight before it came off, but knew or suspected that Fersen was no stranger to

it.' In England, one always knew everything in fact. It was in English newspapers that Marie Antoinette's walks in the gardens of Versailles after dinner became *immondes orgies*—and English journalists who reproduced—and invented—shameful ballads upon her. Her English friends owed her a reparation after all.

June dawned. What restless hearts there must have been in Paris then—Fersen who had staked all, and Colonel Crawford who had staked so much! As for the Queen—perhaps their devotion, their passion for her salvation had roused her to a last hope that it might even now be accomplished. On June 17, 1791, Colonel Crawford and Mrs. Sullivan left Paris to avoid suspicion, and, by the aid of the lost passport, reached Brussels safely. Colonel Crawford had with him a large sum of money, which was to be remitted to the King when he had crossed the frontier. Sayer, the English valet, was left in Paris to make final arrangements.

The flight to Varennes is one of those pages of history which reads like a wild romance. The maddening stupidity of the King, the delays, the thousand temptings of Providence, Fersen the coachman, the Queen drawing back into the archway to escape the eagle eye of Lafayette, the lumbering and blundering of the great unlucky *berline* over the mire and ruts of the neglected roads of old France, the fatal *dénouement* at Varennes, the wretched return—one reads of them to-day with something of that passionate excitement and trembling anticipation with which Colonel Crawford and Mrs. Sullivan must have read of them at Brussels.

The Englishman had at stake even more than he anticipated. When the *berline* rolled back into Paris, to a never-ending accompaniment of howls and execrations, one of his coachmen incautiously observed that he knew the carriage. A fellow-servant, with more wit and prudence, declared the coachman was mistaken. The mob would otherwise have razed Colonel Crawford's house to the ground. It was to this narrow escape that Marie Antoinette alluded when she wrote to Fersen at Brussels in the October of that same fatal year: 'I cannot tell you how deeply touched I am by all *ce bon* M. Crawford has done for us—the King also. In a few days I will send you a message for him from us. How happy we should be if we could do anything for him! There are so few people who show us real attachment! It is known here how much he has been connected with us, and I greatly feared for his house.'

She had reason to fear for everything that was his. Just a year later Colonel Crawford was classed as an *émigré*, and his matchless collection of furniture, pictures and statuary sold. But perhaps some of his sacrifice was made up to him by that little message which the Queen *did* send him, as she had promised, 'in a few days.' 'I was so hurried when I last wrote, I could say nothing to M. Crawford. Tell him that we know how more than devoted he is to us, and that it has always been a happiness to me to trust to his attachment; but that in our present frightful position, each new proof of devotion he gives us *est un titre de plus bien doux à notre reconnaissance.*'

For such a gratitude from such a Mistress, others than Fersen might count their world well lost.

Crawford had the supremely English quality of not knowing when he was beaten. Plots and counterplots for the salvation of the royal family, each more desperate than the last, filled his time and mind.

'M. Crawford has been in England,' wrote Fersen to the Queen, 'to learn the disposition of its Court.' Its disposition was the perfect neutrality so essentially cautious and British. From England, Crawford went back to Brussels, where the Queen wrote to Fersen under cover of Mrs. Sullivan, the 'pretended Mrs. Crawford.' Then he was in Paris—the go-between of Fersen and the Queen: hoping against hope, still planning, contriving, scheming; using Mme. Toscani, the 'surveillante,' as a faithful medium for letters and parcels, trusting always in the Queen's strength and resource—as if he knew, with Mirabeau, 'There is only one man about the King, and that is the Queen.'

In 1792 Fersen records in his Journal that Crawford has seen the Queen and talked to her. Then Fersen writes to his Royal Mistress to tell her to buy 'two pretty hats' and give them to Madame Toscani, who will send them to Mrs. Sullivan, who, in her turn, will remit them to Fersen. It is not necessary to add that the 'two pretty hats' were to contain papers, written in cypher and invisible ink, which would convey the Queen's news to her faithful servants at Brussels. What news was there? The removal of the royal family to the Temple, the massacre of Madame de Lamballe; horrors crowding on as in some bad dream. The situation grew daily more desperate. The plots were more desperate still. That universal league of pity which had set itself to save the Queen, and which included an Italian, a Swede, two Englishmen, and an Englishwoman, worked and

thought now, day and night. In those last desperate hours, indeed, to Fersen's wild devotion, even Colonel Crawford seemed 'craintif et prudent.' But that he went daily with his life in his hand, having already sacrificed much that makes life dear, admits of no doubt. He was still steady in his self-constituted post, when Marie Antoinette was writing the last words on her situation to Fersen: 'I still live, but by a miracle.' To the end, she spoke of the Englishman as the friend whose fidelity was past question, as one whom she could only reward by danger, sorrow, ruin—and whom she knew was content to be so rewarded. On July 21, 1792, she wrote to Fersen: 'I address to you to-day two *brochures*, two to Mrs. Sullivan, and two to M. de Crawford.'

Those words were like the last sigh of the living death she knew then. And after them was silence.

Colonel Crawford long survived the Queen he could not save. He lived for a while with many other *émigrés* at Brussels, Frankfort, and Vienna. He relieved their necessities from a most generous purse. Directly after the event he had written a 'Secret History of the King of France and his escape from Paris in June 1791.' In 1809 was published his 'Notice on Marie Antoinette.' What a flood of recollections must have rushed upon him as he took up the pen! Before that time he had returned to the Paris where he had first, and last, seen her. He who had once played for high stakes with destiny resumed his old gambling habits; had whist parties with Talleyrand; collected the historical portraits which became one of the sights of Paris; married his Mrs. Sullivan; and died in 1819.

Colonel Crawford did not perhaps attain a very high standard of virtue, but he was a Man. More than that, he was the Englishman who dared and did the best for Marie Antoinette, and splendidly failed in a noble aim.

In the darkness of the Temple, out of the shadows, herself a shadow, came yet one last English friend to help the Queen. Very little can be discovered about Mrs. ATKYNS. In the light days before the Revolution she was presented at Versailles. Marie Antoinette must long have forgotten, if she had ever realised, the existence of the widow of an English Member of Parliament, no one in particular, and very little likely to touch the destiny of a Queen. Stirred by a generous pity, Mrs. ATKYNS obtained admission to the Temple, through a municipal commissary, and on the condition of nothing secret being said or given to Marie Antoinette. Mrs. ATKYNS was disguised, it is said, as a

National Guard. Nervousness made her drop the note she was to have conveyed to the Queen in a bouquet; but before the commissary could seize it she had swallowed it. He drove her out angrily. But she obtained—God knows how—another interview in which she unfolded her plan of escape. But she had to meet an unexpected obstacle in the Queen herself. Marie Antoinette would never leave her children, she said. The desire to save herself had passed away. The woman who, when she hit her head against the low doorway of the Temple and was asked by one of the guards if she had hurt herself, replied, ‘Nothing can hurt me now,’ had left her neither the hope nor the fear which rouses to action.

She begged Mrs. Atkyns to leave her to the fate for which she was prepared, and to devote all her energies to saving her son. The Englishwoman *did* arrange for that escape to be accomplished with the help of Madame de Beauharnais and the Comte de Frotté. She was only one of many who thought that a God who was good could not have left a child to such piteous sufferings as those endured by Louis XVII., and who believed, in the shuddering tenderness of her heart, in a Dauphin set free by the means she had arranged. In 1818 she was living in Paris on a small pension allowed her by the Bourbons.

She was the last of Marie Antoinette’s English friends. After that attempt, the ‘horror of great darkness,’ the Conciergerie, closed upon her whose sparkling loveliness had dazzled a cautious Walpole as well as impulsive Dillons. For the Queen of France, who had played at English liberty in her English garden with her freeborn Englishmen, there remained the chill rain of the October morning, the death drums, the tumbril, and the guillotine.

The participation of English people in the fortunes of Marie Antoinette may be attributed perhaps, in her early days, to the irrepressible ubiquity of the nation; and, later, to its truly British conviction that the presence of a few Englishmen, quite insufficiently equipped, is sure to turn the tide of any evil fortune.

They could do nothing for her. But to-day, more than a hundred years after, it might surely be a healing touch on the soreness of national jealousy and rivalry, to reflect that Frenchmen and Englishmen once forgot both, and were brothers in forlorn daring to save the Queen of France.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

A REGIMENTAL CUSTOM.

MOST people, I presume, have heard of the 'King's Own Hackbutiers,' but it is not everyone who knows enough of them to be aware that they are the exception which proves the rule that 'Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.' In saying this I would be taken to refer to the commissioned officers only; for the rank and file do not seem to differ from other 'Tommies,' unless we are inclined to give credence to the regimental boast that a company of the Hackbutiers can hold as much beer as any ordinary battalion; the which, having frequently been in the company of defenders of their country, other than Hackbutiers, at a time when they were partaking of liquid refreshment, I am rather inclined to reject as trenching on the marvellous. The officers, however, live in a condition compared to which the life of a young Jesuit, a negro slave, or a fag at a public school, is a state of dangerously unbridled license. Regimental custom regulates their lives, and from its dictates there is no appeal. But, rigorous as is their servitude, the Hackbutiers hug their chains, and are never so happy as when they have just discovered some new regimental custom which may yet further differentiate them from 'garden soldiers,' as they have recently taken to calling all wearers of the Sovereign's uniform who do not carry on their collars the 'two wings conjoined in lure,' the cognisance of the Protector Somerset. I need hardly here explain that the Hackbutiers claim to be the modern representatives of the mercenaries whom that ambitious chieftain led to the invasion of Scotland; they prosecute this claim by periodically petitioning the authorities for permission to add the name of Pinkie-cleugh to their battle honours; and the greatest function of their mess to this day is the dinner on the anniversary of the battle. Once I believe they were tactless enough to invite the officers of a Highland regiment to that gathering; and it is to those Highlanders, who were not unnaturally indignant at the suggestion that they should banquet in commemoration of the ruthless slaughter of their own ancestors, that I trace the dissemination of the fiction that on all regimental parades the Hackbutiers carry their colours upside down to distinguish themselves from other regiments. Fiction though this undoubtedly is, it is no whit more absurd than many of the customs to which the Hackbutiers cling with the utmost tenacity;

and it is notorious that no Hackbutier ever appears at a Levée in the full-dress uniform he wears when with his battalion—there are so many unauthorised little distinctions, without which he would never dare to face his comrades, but which would probably draw down a scathing reprimand from any higher authority on whose notice they were obtruded.

‘Once a Hackbutier always a Hackbutier’ is their rule, and no officer has ever been known to exchange into, or out of, the regiment; which is a very salutary provision, as nothing short of a lifetime would enable a man to master the intricate body of customs to which a Hackbutier is expected to conform. Indeed, even a temporary absence at Hythe, or any other training course, produces so many solecisms that the mess seems to swim in the champagne of fines for weeks after the return of the wanderer to the bosom of his battalion. Service in the Hackbutiers is, to a great extent, hereditary; no old Hackbutier would ever willingly allow his son to serve in any other regiment; and their reverence for custom is partly due to ancestral instincts. But Ralph Galsing’s family had served in the regiment for six generations, and he was the only Hackbutier who was ever known to treat the regimental customs with disrespect. It may be said in his excuse that his total service only covered a period of about nine months; but his sometime brother-officers always say that they never expected it of him, and that the poor fellow disappointed them sadly.

The Hackbutiers have been singularly unfortunate of late years in missing opportunities of active service; so that there was not a single officer of the First Battalion who had ever seen a shot fired in earnest when they received orders to embark for South Africa. When they detrained on the quay at Southampton, Galsing was surprised to see the sergeants going round and distributing what looked like gigantic lamp-wicks to all the rank and file.

‘What the deuce are they doing?’ he inquired of his captain.

‘Didn’t you know,’ was the reply, ‘that it has always been the custom of the Hackbutiers to start on foreign service with matches lighted, ever since they sailed with Buckingham to the Isle of Rhé?’

‘But in those days they wanted the matches to fire off their old blunderbusses. What the devil’s the use of carrying the things now?’

The captain looked at his subaltern, much as if the latter had asked ‘Why need a soldier obey orders?’ or ‘Why need a man keep the Ten Commandments?’ but he said nothing. Galsing treasured the look in his memory; but for the moment he tried to laugh off his mistake, saying:

‘Anyhow, I shall know where to get a light when we are on board the transport.’

Four weeks later the Hackbutiers were going into action for the first time for forty years. The officers sat round an apology for a camp-fire, smoking; and there was rather an awkward silence. Needless to say, none of them was in the least afraid, but they were all horribly nervous, or, to speak more accurately, afraid that they were going to be afraid. For they, none of them, had the faintest idea what it would be like. Some of them had risked their necks in the hunting-field; others had faced death on the rocky sides of virgin Alpine peaks; one of them could recall the supreme moment when he had stopped a wounded grizzly with his second barrel, not half a yard from the muzzle of his rifle; another had a vivid recollection of the horrible inward qualms with which he had accompanied a cousin out rabbit-shooting, knowing that that cousin was about on a par with Mr. Winkle in respect of accuracy of aim and familiarity with firearms; and a third could remember how, at the age of sixteen, he had heard a grating noise in the dead of night, and crept downstairs just in time to see two burly ruffians scuttle across the lawn from the drawing-room window they had been attempting to force.

But none of these experiences gave them any criterion as to how they were likely to behave when all the air was full of those blood-curdling bullet-swishes they had often heard with perfect composure from the shelter of a marker’s pit. And they had to live up to such a splendid reputation next day—a reputation far dearer to every man there present than his own life or credit. Besides, the men had never been tried. How far would they justify the regimental boast, ‘Nothing stops a Hackbutier but the word “Halt!” and not always that if his bayonet’s fixed.’

All therefore felt a sense of something like relief when Galsing broke the silence by addressing the Colonel.

‘I suppose there’s no doubt, sir, that we shall come under fire to-morrow?’

‘Not the slightest, Galsing; but why do you ask? It doesn’t much matter which day we start on the work; we’ve come out here to fight, and I reckon we shall have enough of it. But I don’t suppose any of us care when it begins, except to say, “The sooner the better!”’

‘Then, sir, it’s about time we started to carry out the old regimental custom.’

The familiar phrase arrested the attention of all present.

'Eh! what?' cried the Colonel. 'What regimental custom do you mean?'

'I had a great-great-uncle, sir, who served with the Hackbutiers in the Peninsula. We've got a letter from him at home, describing how he joined just before Talavera. In it he says: "In accordance with the regimental custom, I and two others who had never been in action before toasted the girls of our hearts and told where we had met them for the first and last time."'

There was an uneasy stir all round the circle; nobody liked to be the first to say that a regimental custom was preposterous, but almost everybody present would have been glad to utter some such heresy.

'I never heard of any such custom,' said the senior major.

'Well, sir,' rejoined Galsing, 'my grandfather recollected carrying it out the night before the Alma. So I have secured a bottle of whisky to drink the toasts in, and here it is'—producing a luxury rather scarce in the brigade just then.

'Well, gentlemen,' said the Colonel, 'if it's a regimental custom, it must be observed. Being a married man myself, I hardly need tell you whom *I* toast.' A covert smile flickered round the circle, for it was generally supposed that their chief regretted no other act of his life so much as the utterance of the words "I will" at the altar-rails. 'Pon my word, I forget where I met her first, but the last time was on the Quay at Southampton. Now, Major Apst!'

'Nellie!' said the second-in-command, promptly, 'the best little woman in the world! I met her first at the Hunt Ball, and last, if you can call it meeting, in the hall at home, just before we started. Bradgate!'

'The girl I'm engaged to!' was the reply. 'I met her first out golfing, and last, when we lunched at the Café Royal and went to a *matinée* at Daly's. Seffington!'

'Pass me!' answered the senior captain. 'I never knew the woman yet who was worth a second thought.'

This theory of life seemed infectious; for the following speaker asserted that all girls were much of a muchness, and the next that women were a pretty mean lot, taking them altogether.

'Mrs. Apst!' said Captain Wrendon boldly. 'I met her first when she came as a bride to the battalion, and last when I dined at the Apsts, two days before we started. You needn't be jealous, Major, because, of course, you know that mine is a hopeless

passion. But when I meet an exact duplicate of your wife I'll win her for my own, if human effort can do it.'

'Quite right, Wrendon!' came from Lake, whose turn was next. 'Find a woman who's worthy to be named in the same week with Mrs. Apst, and she'll be quite good enough for the likes of me.' A hum of assent passed round the circle, for Mrs. Apst was the idol of her husband's brother-officers.

'My turn, is it?' asked Netherby-Strachan. 'Then, I'm sorry to say that I've forgotten all about the girl whom I loved, except that she was perfection. But as I never could make up my mind whether I ought to speak to her or her governor first in asking her to marry me, I concluded to try to forget her, and I've succeeded so well that I've forgotten all about her—except herself.'

Pilston laughed a loud, mirthless laugh. 'When I want to keep a regimental custom, I keep it in the letter and in the spirit too. It wouldn't be a very great stretch of the truth for me to toast your wife, Major, as some of the others have done. But there was a girl once of whom I thought a lot more than I have ever thought of Mrs. Apst. I met her first when I was staying—never mind where, with never mind whom; I met her last on the never-to-be-forgotten occasion when she told me that it wasn't quite good enough—that she would have married me if I'd had five thousand a year, but, as I hadn't, she was going to prefer someone who had that essential qualification. Since then I've thanked my stars that I didn't happen to possess the necessary income. I'd rather not be married to a girl who made that a *sine quâ non*. But I won't drink her health, if you'll excuse me, because I don't wish her any particular happiness, and it's all I can do not to wish her as much misery as she once caused me.'

There was silence for a few minutes. The bitterness of Pilston's tone had imported into the business on hand a seriousness which previous speakers had struggled to avoid. Then Thompson, the junior captain, spoke. 'When I first met her she was a girl nursing a doll; when I last met her she was a woman nursing a baby. Whether I should have had any chance if I'd made my own feelings plainer I don't know; I reckon I shouldn't. But here's her health, notwithstanding!'

'Mine's rather a hard case,' said the senior subaltern. 'The girl I'm in love with—names haven't been mentioned to-night, except Mrs. Apst's, so I won't particularise—is my sister's bosom-friend; that blocks me, you see; she's always awfully nice to me

because I'm Dolly's brother; but I want her to be nice to me because I'm myself. She gives me all the encouragement she possibly can—and yet, I don't know whether to take it as encouragement. I asked Mrs. Apst's advice, and she said she couldn't give me any worthy of the name without seeing the girl. Now, as the girl lives in Connemara, and Mrs. Apst never leaves the battalion, except to go to her own people, I'm not likely to get much help that way. That's all my story.'

'First and last time of meeting?' queried Netherby-Strachan laconically.

'Can't possibly say. Our first meeting was in the prehistoric days of "Touch last!" and "Hide-and-seek!" Our last meeting—well, I don't exactly recollect when I saw her last.'

'And you imagine you're in love!' sneered Brogsby, the next senior. 'Now, I really am in love, and really am rather badly used by fortune. Prepare yourself for a hearty laugh, all you chaps, for there's a touch of the ludicrous in it, too. I'm in love with the parlour-maid at a friend's house; she really is the prettiest, sweetest-looking creature imaginable. I've called and called at the house, until the mistress has marked me down as a safe spot for one of her numerous daughters. But no etiquette book that I'm aware of prescribes any form of introducing yourself to a domestic servant with a view to matrimony; and, if I made any advances to the girl, she'd imagine—well, you can guess what she'd imagine. So I'm euchred.'

'And a good job too!' said the Adjutant, possibly wishing to let his own turn pass unnoticed. 'The idea of being in love with a girl you've never spoken to, except to ask her whether her mistress was in! And a parlour-maid! Hang it, I'm not proud, but we must draw the line somewhere.'

'When I ask your advice, Mr. Gandleur, I shall feel obliged to you for giving it,' rejoined Brogsby, with laborious politeness; 'till then, perhaps, you'll be content to deal with your own love affairs, and leave mine alone.'

'All right, Brogsby! Keep your hair on; and, if you can't, use Tatcho!' was the retort under which the Adjutant dissembled any disappointment he may have felt at the failure of his attempted diversion. 'We met, 'twas in a crowd—of sixteen in a railway compartment, coming back from Henley. We met, we saw, we loved—at least, I loved, and she let me—till we were ordered to the front, when she intimated, in the most delicate manner possible, that she wasn't equal to the mental strain of the

part of the girl I left behind me, so she was going to look out for somebody else of equally good taste and more stay-at-home occupation. She added the gratuitous information that she would always be glad to hear of my welfare. I might have rejoined that I should always be sorry to hear of hers; however, I contented myself with kicking up a pretty deep shelter-trench in the gravel across the Broad Walk, where we parted. And that's all.'

The interest was beginning to thicken now, for four of the next five subalterns were notoriously in love with the same girl—the daughter of the rector of the town where they had last been quartered—but they all skated dexterously round the difficulty.

'We met first at the Thingumbobs, and last at the What's-theirnames,' said Crapp, 'and that's all my story, except that she's miles too good for me, or anybody.'

'Our first and last meetings were in her people's drawing-room,' said Narkisson, 'and she's a clipper, that's what she is.'

'I've been engaged to a girl ever since she was eight and I was fifteen,' said Denton. 'I don't know whether she means to stick to it, but I do; I went to see her just before we sailed, and I fancied——'

'Oh, blow fancies!' interjected Netherby-Strachan, who was only anxious to see how the two remaining rivals would face the emergency.

'I first met her at a—you know what they call the thing,' began Thrapston vaguely, and then hurried rapidly on. 'The last time I saw her—well, I'm not quite sure she was there, but, anyhow, I thought it was she. So, here's her health! Your turn, Riseley!'

'The first time I met her she asked me for a subscription to something or other, and the last time we met I paid up,' was Riseley's contribution. 'She's one too many for me.'

Crapp, Narkisson and Thrapston eyed him viciously; they all knew to whom he referred, their purses having also been laid under contribution.

'I drink to the sweetest and prettiest girl in the world,' said Latimer, suiting the action to his words. 'When I first saw her she was a baby, just six hours old; the last time was when she kissed me on the doorstep——'

'Hold hard, Latimer! You don't mean to tell us that you're engaged,' interrupted the Adjutant; it is another custom of the

Hackbutiers that no one below the rank of field-officer should marry. 'Because, if you aren't——'

'There isn't much harm in my being kissed by my youngest sister, is there?' retorted Latimer. A howl of disgust went up from the whole circle; but as soon as it had died away he went on, 'Still, we mustn't forget Galsing. You started this show, Galsing, so you've got to put in your little bit.'

'Do you think I'd have remembered my great-great-uncle's letter if I'd ever cared two buttons for a girl?' was the conclusive rejoinder; and the proceedings terminated.

Next morning, as they were moving into action, Galsing found himself near Denton. 'Didn't I pull all your legs beautifully last night?' he asked with a grin. Denton was too horrified, for the moment, to retort, but the appalling sacrilege of which his comrade had then avowed himself guilty was vividly present to his mind, at intervals, all through that longest of days.

It was a grim, unpicturesque struggle; the men slid forwards on their stomachs, from cover to cover, along one bare hillside after another, the average rate of progress being about a hundred yards an hour, the expenditure of ammunition about two thousand rounds for every hit. When it grew too dark to fight any longer the Hackbutiers halted for the night on the ground they had won, and an informal and ill-supplied mess was held behind a large boulder. The officers were all dog-tired, and not a little depressed at the prospect of an interminable series of such days; but in view of the necessity of keeping up the spirits of the rank and file they were all outwardly as cheerful as if they knew of the message which an enthusiastic war-correspondent was even then putting on the wires: 'The Hackbutiers did splendid work.' Denton's grievance returned to his memory in full force.

'Where's that young devil, Galsing?' he inquired, peering into the faces dimly illuminated by a single lantern. 'Do you know, I believe he had the infernal cheek——'

'Well, we won't talk of it,' interrupted Wrendon, the captain of Galsing's company; 'the poor young chap was shot through the head not an hour ago.'

'Oh!' muttered Denton, shamed and shocked; then, thus rudely recalled to the realities of campaigning, he asked, 'Is there anyone else—missing?'

In reply arose a babel of voices. The Colonel, Lake, Crapp, and Thrapston had, it appeared, all been wounded, but no one could tell exactly how badly.

'Netherby-Strachan was hit——' Latimer began.

'But more frightened than hurt, young 'un,' put in the bearer of the name mentioned.

'I say, old chap, in which surname, eh?' asked Pilston, with affected concern.

'The brutes have only broken my left arm, which'll be cursedly awkward for crawling over these boulders to-morrow. But does anyone know where Seffington is?'

'He wasn't taken to the rear, or I should have heard of it,' said Apst, now in command. 'Isn't he here?'

They called him, but got no answer. Who had seen him last? No one could recollect having noticed him all day. Even Denton, his subaltern, could not remember getting any orders from him.

He said, 'Make the men keep under cover, and work straight to their front by your compass direction,' and pitchforked me into the fighting-line,' was all the explanation he had to offer. 'But I know the line the company took, and I'll find him, if I have to search all night. Can you spare me the lantern? You don't want it to smoke by.'

'I'll come with you,' said Latimer; 'Seffington's done me more than one good turn, and he sha'n't say I'm ungrateful.'

The two subalterns went off together, while the others curled up and tried to go to sleep. The search was not a long one. Denton's instinct took him straight to a water-hole into which Seffington had fallen or dragged himself. He had been dead several hours; indeed, he could not have survived his wound very long; but he had had time to draw out and open a locket containing a girl's photograph, which his stiffened hand still held before his sightless, staring eyes.

They could do nothing for him, and turned back in a gloomy silence, which Latimer was the first to break.

'You saw what he had in his hand, Denton?'

'Yes, I saw. I know what you're thinking of. "He never knew the woman yet who was worth a second thought." It strikes me that poor Galsing wasn't the only chap who was pulling our legs last night.'

'But Galsing never suggested that it was a regimental custom to speak the truth on that subject; and it can't have been, unless the Hackbutiers of the past were very different from most men I've ever come across.'

J. B. HODGE.

A LONDONER'S LOG-BOOK.

XVI.

THE course of true love never did run smooth; and, though Bumpstead and Bertha emerged safely from the fog, I fear that they will have to encounter a good many shoals and breakers and contrary winds before they touch the desired shore of matrimony.

I am happy to say that none of the difficulties which seem to threaten their course have originated in Stuccovia. It is true that Selina, when fatigued or worried, has been known to declare that I am a mass of selfishness; but I do not carry that amiable trait of my sex so far as to begrudge Bertha her happiness merely because I shall miss her. Certainly, she has been an exhilarating element in our rather humdrum existence; but, from my experience in like cases, I anticipate that the dear girl will contrive to see a good deal of us even after she is married; and in the meantime she and Bumpstead (whom I am learning to call Jack) have the house pretty much to themselves. The enamoured swain tells us that, Lent being over, he is not so much 'bunged up' with parochial engagements as was the case in March; and he is able to give us a great deal of his society. At meal-times he presents himself with touching regularity, even sometimes dropping in for a breakfast-cup of coffee and a slice of ham on his way back from early service; and, after his boxing night at the club, smoking his pipe in my study till untimely hours. Selina's boudoir is entirely made over to the interesting couple; and it is not safe even to enter the drawing-room without a good deal of circumspection and a preliminary cough. Over all these pastoral friskings Selina smiles serenely. She has honestly done her best for her sister. The supreme end of woman's existence has been attained; and she regards with complacency the triumph of her skill.

The parish is enthusiastic about the engagement. Soulsby lays his lily-hand caressingly on Bumpstead's brawny shoulder, and murmurs, 'May she be to you what my Egeria has been to me. And oh! could I give you a fonder benison than that?' Old Lady Farrington, who, even in her decadence, still wields some social authority among us, lays great stress on Bumpstead's territorial connexions. 'The Bumpsteads are an excellent family.

Indeed, they are cousins of ours. One of Lord Farringford's great-aunts married the Bumpstead of the period. I believe they are Saxon by descent, like the Lowthers and the Tollemaches. I remember there was a rhyme about it, which they were very fond of repeating—

Before the Norman into England came,
Fox Holes was my seat and Bumpstead was my name.'

The Cashingtons, more modern though not more worldly than the dowager, display a keen curiosity about the settlements, and wonder who will pay for the *trousseau*. Bounderley comports himself with characteristic heartiness; smacks Bumpstead on the back, and says, 'Well done, my son, I'm proud of you! There's no flummery betwixt me and you. I know you and you know me; and I tell you you've pulled off a good thing this journey, and no error. You simply meant doing it, and went in, and won. It's just what I did myself; and I like you all the better for it.' The members of the Parochial Club are getting up an illuminated address to 'the Rev. John Thomas Bumpstead, M.A., in grateful recognition of his unwearied interest in our athletic development'; and the Fishers in Deep Waters are combining to present Bertha with a waterproof cloak and a bound series of 'The Commonwealth.'

Unfortunately, in this chorus of congratulation one false note has been struck. Some anonymous friend has sent Bertha a copy, facetiously marked with red ink in telling places, of a treatise on the 'Art of Beauty.' This treatise, though adapted to the needs of London, seems to have originated in New York. It opens with an address to the reader, and goes on to deal in detail with physical imperfections and the method of remedying them. Let me quote some of the marked passages:

DEAR MADAME OR SIR,—The object of this little booklet is to direct the attention of the reader to the many and varied imperfections of the face with which we are apt to be endowed, and to call your attention to the fact that there is in this vast Metropolis a place where relief may be found.

THE EARS.

If the ears are large, ill-shaped, or deformed in any way, they are soon changed to a perfected state. All irregularities and deformities are painlessly, permanently, and successfully corrected, thereby rendering the features symmetrical, harmonious, and expressive.

THE NOSE.

As Shakespeare says, 'A good nose is requisite.' No other feature of the face bears such a relation to what is known as beauty, and no other feature is as helpful or as fatal to man's comeliness.

Few persons can boast a perfect nose. This being so, it will interest many to know that this prominent feature of the face may be improved where it is imperfect. Everybody is familiar with the various types of noses, and may see many of each during a stroll on any of our thoroughfares. Some are repugnant, others pleasing, but all give some determining character, either sympathetic or forbidding, to the face.

Many a countenance, otherwise admirable, is ruined to the eye by the form of the nose, and it is often remarked that such or such a person would be 'good-looking' were it not for his or her nose.

Many are of the opinion that the nose Nature has given, or the one that accident has deformed, is beyond remedy. This is an error, for, when one reflects upon the fact that the nose is greatly composed of cartilage, it will be admitted that few things are easier than giving it direction of form.

Of noses there are six well-defined classes :

- CLASS I.—THE ROMAN, OR AQUILINE NOSE.
- " II.—THE GREEK, OR STRAIGHT NOSE.
- " III.—THE COGITATIVE, OR WIDE-NOSTRILLED NOSE.
- " IV.—THE JEWISH, OR HAWK NOSE.
- " V.—THE SNUB NOSE.
- " VI.—THE CELESTIAL, OR TURN-UP NOSE.

Between these there are infinite crosses and intermixtures, which at first are apt to embarrass one, but after a little practice one is soon able to distinguish with tolerable precision.

CLASS I.—THE ROMAN, OR AQUILINE NOSE, is rather convex, but undulating, as its name aquiline imports. It is usually rugose and coarse, but, when otherwise, it approaches the Greek nose, and the classification is materially altered.

CLASS II.—THE GREEK, OR STRAIGHT NOSE, is *perfectly* straight; any deviation from the right line must be strictly noticed. If the deviation tend to convexity it approaches the Roman type and its true character is marred. On the other hand, when the deviation is towards concavity, it partakes of the Celestial, and its true character is lost. It should be fine and well chiselled, but not sharp. It is the highest and most beautiful form which the organ can assume.

CLASS III.—THE COGITATIVE, OR WIDE-NOSTRILLED NOSE, is, as its secondary name imports, wide at the end, thick and broad, *gradually* widening from below the bridge. This is the type of nose that usually becomes bulbous or clubbed, owing to a glandular degeneration, and is a marked disfigurement. The Cogitative Nose is usually associated with Classes I. and II., rarely with IV., and still less seldom with V. and VI.

CLASS IV.—THE JEWISH, OR HAWK NOSE, is very convex, and preserves its convexity like a bow throughout the whole length, from the eyes to the tip. It is thin and sharp.

CLASSES V. AND VI.—THE SNUB NOSE AND THE TURN-UP, *poeticé* CELESTIAL NOSE.—The form of the former is sufficiently indicated by its name; the latter is distinguished by its presenting a continuous concavity from the eyes to the tip. It is converse in shape to the Jewish nose.

If your nose is Roman and you would have it Grecian, it can be changed to conform with your idea of shape. If pugged, it can be lowered; if drooping, or hawk-billed, it can be given true angles; if crooked, it can be straightened; if depressed, it can be raised. In other words, if it does not please you, it can be remedied to do so, painlessly and quickly, by the most modern and scientific means known to specialists.

When Selina chanced to find this seductive treatise lying on her boudoir-table, her just indignation knew no bounds. She declares that the perpetrator of the outrage is young Lady Farringford (*née* Sally Van Oof), and that it's exactly like her, with her American notions of 'what *she* calls fun and *I* call vulgarity.' Certainly the treatise seems a little personal, for Bertha's nose is inclined to be 'tip-tilted' or 'celestial,' and Jack Bumpstead's, though I should not call it 'cogitative,' might fairly be described as 'clubbed.' But Bertha has sense enough to be amused; and Bumpstead, though not dangerously quick at seeing a joke, opines that 'one of Bertha's pals has been getting at her, and that it's not bad chaff, if you look at it in the right way.'

But, while I am treading these primrose-paths of dalliance, I am forgetting the more serious matters which lie far afieled from Stuccovia. The announcement of Bertha's engagement was very ungraciously received at The Sawpits. Old Mrs. Topham-Sawyer, indeed, is devoutly thankful to have got her youngest daughter off her hands; and though, as she justly observes, Hampshire is not Loamshire, still Bumpstead is a good name, and Fox Holes, though not large, is quite a nice 'thing,' and near Stratton, which will be pleasant for Bertha, for her dear father was a great friend of Lord Northbrook's in 'those days.'

But Tom Topham-Sawyer makes himself, as his manner is, very disagreeable. He protests that a decent-looking girl like Bertha might have done better than chuck herself away on a parson; pooh-poohs the acreage of Fox Holes; and pronounces that old Bumpstead is good for another thirty years—which, as he was born in 1840 and the Bumpsteads are notoriously long-lived, is painfully possible. However, Tom Topham-Sawyer has of course no say in the matter; and his imperfect sympathy with the project is probably due to the fact that he thinks he may have to give the wedding-breakfast, or may even be expected to make some small addition to his sister's exiguous fortune.

Far more serious is the hostility of old Mr. Bumpstead. He has been up to London to talk things over with Selina and me, and has shown a very unaccommodating disposition. He is a man of burly frame, resolute countenance, and uncompromising address. He protests that he has no idea of young fellows marrying the moment they grow up, and expecting their fathers to keep them. 'Of course, when I drop, Jack will step into my place. But I don't take my boots off before I go to bed; and

there are my six daughters to be thought of. Besides, though I have no immediate intention of marrying again, I must reserve my perfect freedom. The long and short of it is that I don't see how it's to be managed. I've told my son that I think him a young fool for his pains, and the best thing you can do is to tell your sister-in-law the same.'

Good Mr. Bumpstead, like all the squires I have ever known, seemed very much accustomed to having it all his own way, and to speaking his mind without let or hindrance. But in making this very unflattering allocution he reckoned without Selina, who is a complete stranger to subserviency, and now joined issue with considerable vivacity. While my more cautious mind was revolving some conciliatory tactics, she observed that, for her own part, she had no notion of anyone playing fast and loose with her sister's affections. She considered that Mr. John Bumpstead was fully old enough to know his own mind, and she should certainly counsel him not to submit to any interference in a matter which concerned his own happiness alone. Her sister's merits she declined to discuss; but this much she would say—that if Mr. Bumpstead fancied that he could secure a nicer, better-principled, better-looking daughter-in-law, she thought he would find himself mistaken. *No one*, of course, would be so absurd as to suggest any difficulties on the score of *birth* or *position*; and, as for money, she was thankful to say that in her family they were not mercenary, and that John and Bertha could put together quite enough to live upon *until they succeeded*.

This vigorous address, delivered with a great deal of emphasis on the words italicised, and with complete indifference to that divinity which doth hedge a squire, produced a marked effect on Mr. Bumpstead, who gasped stertorously, and began to mutter something in the way of apology or explanation; but Selina cut him short. 'Not at all. No apology is necessary. I perfectly understand your anxiety for your son's happiness. I only thought it right to let you know plainly that in my opinion his happiness will be best secured by the marriage which he has been wise enough to propose. Of course, I must leave you to settle all the business part of it with my husband and my brother, who are Bertha's trustees; but the dear child's happiness is *my* care.'

After this rather uncomfortable scene, I sought an interview with Jack Bumpstead, who must no longer be called 'Blazer.' For Selina says, with her usual pungency, 'I believe your treating

him like a schoolboy and calling him by that silly nickname is just the reason why that absurd old father of his thinks he can do what he likes with him. Well, thank goodness, he can't do what he likes with Bertha and me; and I flatter myself that I opened his eyes in that particular, though I confess I thought *your* attitude was even weaker than I expected. You really have no moral courage, or you wouldn't leave all these things to me.'

Jack Bumpstead took the whole affair with what is called 'philosophic calm,' but is really a placidity far more profound than I ever encountered in a philosopher. He said, with easy indifference to metaphor, 'Oh, that's all right. The Gov. was bound to be a bit shirty at first; but when he's had time to blow off the steam he'll come round, and we shall be as right as rain. You see, he's a bit sick at my being a parson. It was right enough when my eldest brother was alive; but, when the poor chap got carried off by that beastly Indian fever, the Old Boy didn't half see the fun of Fox Holes going to the Cloth. He's too much of a gentleman to want me to chuck; and, besides, if he did, I'd see him further first. But of course he'd like to see me in a more paying job than a curacy, or else to marry a girl who's got the stuff. But that ain't my line of country. I've got the girl I wanted, and I mean to stick to her. She's "Miss Wright" and no mistake. By Jove, that *was* a fog!'

So far, I have dealt exclusively with private concerns; but a statesman's time belongs to his country; and even a mere politician ought, at a season of national peril, to be thinking more of the constituency or the candidate than of sisters-in-law and settlements. So, cheered by Jack Bumpstead's easy-going optimism, I left him to arrange matters with his obstructive parent; and took up the thread of Stuccovian politics, which the sudden inrush of domestic excitement had caused me to drop. What recalled me to a sense of my public duty was the receipt of a circular note signed by all the ministers of Evangelical Free Churches in the Stuccovian area. This document was issued on the morning after the Government's Education Bill appeared. It announced that we had reached a crisis in the History of Religious Freedom, and implored all who were opposed to Priestcraft, Fraud, and Oppression to join in a vigorous and practical protest against the latest development of Cecilism.

In response to this alarum, an 'emergency meeting' of the local Liberal Association was hastily summoned, and I was voted

into the chair. Having briefly introduced the subject, I invited suggestions as to the best method of meeting this insidious attack upon our most cherished liberties; but no sooner had I done so than the fissiparous nature of Liberalism became once again even painfully apparent. The debate was opened by an enthusiastic young acolyte from St. Ursula's, who professed himself a follower of that staunch democrat, Mr. Stewart Headlam, and declared in favour of purely secular teaching in the school, provided that the children were taken to High Mass on Sundays and Days of Obligation, and supplied with Mr. Stanton's 'Catholic Prayers,' to be paid for out of a voluntary rate. Against this proposition, at once paradoxical and insidious, the Dissenting ministers rose as one man. They detected in it the grin of reaction under the mask of Liberality, and refused to entertain it on any terms. Minister after minister denounced the tyranny of sacerdotalism and dogma, and all demanded, in trumpet-tones, their heaven-descended right to teach their own undenominationalism at other people's expense. This was unquestionably the prevailing sentiment of the meeting, and the ministers would have had it all their own way, only a discordant note was raised by the Social Democrats. The spokesman of this section proclaimed himself the sworn foe of joss-houses, whether Established or nonconforming; protested that, if any religion were taught, it ought to be the worship of the Goddess of Reason; clamoured for a daily lesson in the social writings of Mr. Bradlaugh; and repudiated as a wretched compromise the suggestion, which had commended itself to some of the more liberal-minded religionists, that a chapter of the Koran should be read as an alternative to the Bible on three mornings in the week.

Amid these distracted counsels it was obviously idle to seek for a unanimous vote. It was felt that if we went to a division we should seriously weaken the forces of freedom and should play into the hands of the Clericalists. It was therefore agreed to adjourn the debate, and I, as chairman, was instructed to consult the lively oracles of the Liberal League, and report the result to an adjourned meeting.

The secretary of our association, who is in close touch with headquarters, arranged an appointment; and two days later I presented myself at the offices of the League.

The door was opened by a hall-porter in a uniform of Primrose plush, who ushered me with much dignity into the Board Room

or Council Chamber of the League. The principal object which there met my eye was a group, rather more than life-sized, of allegorical statuary, representing Lord Rosebery mounted on Ladas, with the officials of the Liberal Headquarters tied to his stirrup.

But alack! I wholly failed to extract from the secretary any clear guidance as to our course with reference to the Education Bill. 'The fact is,' he said, 'it takes us a little by surprise. The Chief is in Italy; and his Groom of the Chambers, who presides at our committees in his absence, declines to commit himself. Asquith is a little hampered by some previous declarations, but no doubt they can be got over, and he will be able to support the Government when it comes to a vote. Grey has long had very strong convictions in favour of clerical control over education, and will be glad of an opportunity of avowing them. And I believe Haldane is going to write a pamphlet showing that the Narrower Sectarianism is the Higher Philosophy. Perhaps, under these circumstances, your association had better not pledge itself to any definite line on the Bill. Just wait till the Chief comes home—he's safe to be back for the Spring Meeting; and then he'll write to the "Times," or make a speech at the City Liberal Club, and we shall know what to say. Meanwhile, if you happen to be passing through Berkeley Square, it might be worth your while to call at No. 38, and have a chat with the Hall Porter. He knows a thing or two, and he's a tremendously sound Imperialist.'

THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOOLBOYS

LEST any old-fashioned person, still subject to the obsolete belief that 'young people should be seen and not heard,' should glance at this paper with an inadequate idea of its seriousness, let me hasten to put him in the way of attaining to a better sense of proportion. He should remember, with the elder Pliny, that *rerum natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis*. He should consider not only our contemporary cult of the child—for it must be confessed that the boy, though he be only one degree removed from childhood, soon loses a good part of his trail of glory at a public school; but he should consider also our cult of the insignificant, the infinitesimal, the merely curious. He should examine the recently acquired volumes of one of our greatest libraries, and observe with admiration the paper-wrappers, with which the publishers protect the binding, pasted between the binding and the fly-leaf for their own perpetual preservation. He should inquire of collectors of *menus* or picture-postcards, and, if he pleases, he may, like Charles Lamb, request to be allowed to examine their bumps. Finally, he should turn to a handsome volume of some 250 pages, lately issued 'for subscribers only,' to wit, 'The Public School Word-Book: A Contribution to a Historical Glossary of Words, Phrases, and Terms of Expression, obsolete and in present use, peculiar to Our Great Public Schools, together with some that have been or are MODISH at the Universities.' He should read the preface, in which the editor, Mr. John S. Farmer, remarks that 'it has been a matter of note, and maybe of surprise, that no attempt has hitherto been made to gather in one volume the numerous Words, Phrases, and Terms of Expression peculiar to OUR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS;' and laments that 'in no case has the question received that analytical, scientific treatment—historically and comparatively—which has proved so invaluable in the "Oxford Dictionary" and in "Slang and its Analogues."'

After this course of wholesome discipline, it is to be hoped that the most recalcitrant of sceptics will approach the subject in a proper spirit, and when he has put off his elderly pedantic scorn

of 'puerilities' we will do what we can to console him by the assurance that there are many subjects more insignificant, less instructive, and certainly less amusing, than this of the language of school-boys to which Mr. Farmer devotes so much serious attention.

It is true that there are not the same picturesqueness, mystery, romance, about the subject as a whole, as cast a glamour upon the annals of crime. There is poetry in the merest Ollendorffian scrap of 'Ducange Anglicus.' 'The crocusses pad through every wild, to fence the gammy stuff, whilst schofel pitchers work the bulls, and gypsies make and plant the gammy-lowr swags.'¹ One would feel here, except for that very unconvincing 'whilst,' quite in the company of Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild; whereas if it were the cant speech of school-boys (under the degree of wickedness achieved in the books of romantic writers like Dean Farrar), we should feel but a mild curiosity with regard to the mere intelligence it was intended to convey. But putting aside the charm of an atmosphere of gypsies and gaol-birds, the linguistic interest of school-boys' words is often greater than that of the cant or flash language of low life. The latter is, in fact, very largely of a kind which is indeed current and popular with boys and young men, and doubtless, in some degree, with their sisters; consisting of mere perversions of ordinary words, verbal jingle or patter, or florid and bombastic phrases such as delight the sporting press. But the language of the public-school boy contains probably a larger proportion, though not, of course, a larger number, of genuine survivals of real words and uses than the language of the street arab. This is certainly true of the one school-language which has hitherto obtained a measure of celebrity, that of Winchester College. This, which was dismissed contemptuously by the editor of 'The Slang Dictionary' as 'too puerile,' so far from being, as he described it, 'another rude mode of disguising English' and 'of conveying secret information,' is for the most part of perfectly natural growth. It preserves many words which were very good English some centuries ago, and some which are not far from being good Hampshire now. Thus, to 'lobster,' which is still the Winchester

¹ 'The beggars pretending to be doctors walk through every village to sell spurious soap and medicines, while the disposers of base coin get rid of bad fire-shilling pieces, and gypsies make and hide their base coin and booty.'—From *The Vulgar Tongue*, by Ducange Anglicus (1857).

'notion'¹ for to 'cry,' is probably the Hampshire 'louster,' to make a disagreeable noise, though it has been suggested that the term is derived from the redness of the eyes produced by that exercise. To 'firk' or 'ferk' means in the ordinary parlance of Wykehamists to 'send' a person. You can be 'firked up' so many places 'up to books' (*i.e.* in class); or, for a grave offence, you may be 'firked' altogether. *Naturam expellas furca* has, of course, suggested an etymology for the word suitable to this last and tersest use of it; but it refuses, like Nature, to be expelled with the pitchfork into the Latin language, and is found in Old and Middle, and even Modern English.

It is not a little curious, and is apt to feed the spiritual pride of Wykehamists, that their inherited peculiarities of speech should be so much more noticeable than those of other schools. The simplicity and the isolation of public-school life have doubtless been the principal factors in preserving old ancestral forms of expression which have gradually been jostled out of use in the larger world; and, while one would expect Eton, Westminster, and Harrow, from their greater accessibility to the corruptions of 'the Town,' to lose much of their linguistic distinction, one would equally expect schools like Shrewsbury and Durham to be as rich as Winchester in these heirlooms of language. To judge from Mr. Farmer's 'Word-book' this is not the case. Not only does Winchester provide him with many more idioms than any other school, but it is the only school the idioms of which connect themselves to any considerable degree, in his pages, with wider fields of etymology. It is probable, however, that this is largely due to the fact that the 'notions' of other old schools have not been studied with the scholarly care which one of the Winchester masters, Mr. R. G. K. Wrench, has devoted to the language of Wykehamists. Mr. Farmer has rightly enough incorporated the bulk of Mr. Wrench's work; but for the rest his lexicon does not contain much philological lore. And yet one would suppose that there must be something more than a merely modern and whimsical derivation for many of the idioms of old Schools other than Winchester. Some few, which Mr. Farmer prints without explaining their derivations, have derivations or relations with the outside world which are either known or easily guessed. Thus the Eton 'conduct,' or chaplain, whose title many Etonians suppose to be

¹ 'Notion' is the Wykehamical term or 'notion' for any word, phrase, habit, place or person, supposed to be known only or in a peculiar degree or acceptation to Wykehamists.

due to the fact that he 'conducts' the service, is, of course, the hired or, as he is called in old writers, the 'conduct priest.' Again, the expression 'to cog on' marks, goals, runs, which appears to be the equivalent at Durham Grammar School for the more general school-boy idiom 'to cock on'—i.e. to add unfairly—is only a special use of a common enough word, used with a somewhat similar peculiarity by Coriolanus in Shakespeare's play: 'I'll mountebank their loves, cog their hearts from them.' And there are probably many words in use at public schools which would, and will, yield up their linguistic secrets to Mr. Farmer and other students of the by-paths of etymology. Why do, or did, the boys of Derby School say to 'hum' for to smell, to 'switch' for to hit in the eye, or Felstedians 'shack' for share, or Marlburians 'bolly' for pudding, or the scholars of Durham 'fobs' for boiled bread-and-milk? Experts perhaps know; and I will refrain from this most tempting form of guessing at truth.

Word-hunting is indeed well known to be one of the most fascinating pursuits to which the human mind can fall a victim. It is so easy to begin it! Words are our constant companions, and small differences in vocabulary, or the need of some subtler distinction between the meaning of two words than we are accustomed to make, may at any moment send us off upon a chase as ardently pursued and even longer and more remarkable for its desperate leaps than that of the hart in 'Hart-Leap Well.' Clergymen in country parishes and retired officers are very likely to be bitten. People without the least training in logic or languages will rush in where scholars well might fear to tread, and the result is that there is probably more rubbish, of a harmless, and often of an entertaining kind, to be found in the transactions of etymology than in any other department of human study. And not only so. People who never heard of etymology are constantly etymologising. At school we exercised our ingenuity on other words besides 'firk.' Some fifteen years ago we still prepared part of our work, in the large building known as 'School,' seated on hard and narrow fixed benches which formed hollow squares. At the angles were old oak boxes containing our books—and not unfrequently more attractive articles, whether of diet or diversion—and also acting as writing desks. The lids of these boxes, it may be said in passing, often served as screens against the searching eye of the 'bible-clerk' or prefect in charge of us, and sometimes as very efficient nut-crackers. Such a box was

known as a 'scob;' and it was popularly supposed that the word was merely 'box' spelt, or pronounced, backwards. Then came Mr. Wrench, however, who, 'in the heap of his knowledge,' traced the word to the *scabellum* (French, *escabeau*; English, 'bench'), on which the box stood. At any rate, the term is not due to any merely modern word-play, for, says Mr. Wrench, 'in a bill to J. Hutton at his entrance into the college, 1620, occurs the item: "For a scobb to hold his books: 3s. 6d."'

Mr. Smythe Palmer, in the amusing introduction to 'Folk-Etymology,' gives a large number of words which have been perverted in their development from this habit of seeking for etymologies. Thus an 's' was long ago wedged into the Teutonic 'iland' from a fancied connection with the Latin *insula*; the good old English word 'rime' must needs be dressed up into 'rhyme,' because it was supposed, in spite of Milton, to be essentially connected with *rhythm*; while the humble, but quite well-founded, 'causey' was actually slighted, and finally discarded, as if it were a mere vulgar form of that impostor *causeway*.

Apart from those words in the school-boy's vocabulary which are survivals, more or less modified, of words once of a more extended use, there are two main classes of what may be called school-boy language pure and simple. These, after the personifying manner of Renaissance Art, we might picture as the offspring of two prolific brethren, the one of *Usus*, the other of *Lusus*. *Usus* we know from Horace as the great begetter of language: 'Genitor Usus' as he calls him in this connection:

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus et norma loquendi.

Whether we speak in order to express or to conceal our thoughts, we speak with reference to usage, and we are *using* language to do what no other means will do equally well. The school-boy has naturally a vocabulary of this class adapted to his conditions, and the boys of each particular school have their own special conditions and the suitable terms in which to speak of them. Thus all school-boys, being subjected to the persecution of examinations (which being, like other people, busy, they call for short 'exams.'), and being averse to the wasteful process of 'swotting,' 'sapping,' or 'mugging' during a whole term when there is so much to be done in the way of 'ekker,' find as the fatal hour approaches that a little 'cramming,' or at least some 'extra sapping' (*varice lectiones* as before) is desirable. If not,

they may be tempted to 'crib' or 'welch,' for fear of being 'ploughed,' 'cropped,' or even 'supered' or 'superjammed.'¹ If, however, they are 'nailed' or 'spotted,' they will richly deserve to be 'swished,' 'whopped,' 'bibled,' or even to be 'firked' altogether—*i.e.* to 'get the sack' or 'the boot.' Again, there must of necessity be terms of art, borrowed often from outside, but appropriated to particular local use. The 'bully' at Eton and the 'hot' at Winchester correspond, with their differences, to the more widely known 'scrummage' or 'scrum' of Rugby football. Certain time set apart for preparation of work is called 'toy-time' at Winchester, 'banco' at Charterhouse. Mr. Farmer asserts that 'tosh' is 'general' among school-boys for a foot-tub or bath, and is derived from the words 'toe-wash.' This will remind a Wykehamist of his $\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$, the 'notion' for a foot-bath which is used for filling the ordinary bath (known as 'bidet'). The latest Wykehamical lexicographers, three 'Beetleites,' or members of a certain house at Winchester, spell this word 'toe-pan,' and derive it from ' $\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ = the all. Probably because it was used by all the men in the Chamber;' but this is surely putting the cart before the horse, if not precisely the pan before the toe. Certainly I well remember that in College we wrote the words in Greek at the head of our ' $\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ roll'—*i.e.* the list of the 'inferiors'² in any particular chamber, and of the nights on which they were each required to take a hot bath. This roll was usually written out by the 'man' (*vulgo* boy) who had the best handwriting, and was embellished with some appropriate motto. The best of these that I remember owed its point to the custom of having cakes or buns up in the bedroom on such nights as the generosity or success of some man in the Chamber provided them, and to the fame of Buzzard as a cake-manufacturer. Parodying Juvenal's threat to the gluttonous Roman, who carried his undigested peacock to the bath, the $\tau\omicron\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ motto ran :

Pœna tamen præsens, cum tu deponis amictus
Turgidus et crudum *buteonem* ad balnea portas.*

¹ *I.e.* superannuated.

² An 'inferior' is anyone who is not a præfect; but in each chamber in College there is a 'candle-keeper' (familiarily 'tolly-keeper'), whose inferiority is mitigated by important privileges.

* This may, perhaps, be freely rendered as follows :—

'Swift is the reckoning which the Fates foretell
To youths who feast not wisely but too well :
Soon shirtless they must bear—aye, there's the rub !—
Their undigested Buzzard to the tub.'

This, however, is school-boy wit rather than school-boy slang, and in any case belongs, perhaps like the notion τὸ πᾶν, to the category of *lusus* rather than to that of *usus*. But under the latter must be grouped the large number of names of persons or of places which become names of things. Thus at Winchester a half-volley is always called a 'barter,' from the prowess of Warden Barter in dealing with such a ball; and 'John Des,' pronounced almost as one word, is a particular sort of scribbling paper, used especially for mathematics, which was introduced by the Rev. John Desborough Walford, once second-master. The 'links' of Loretto, a short 'constitutional' taken before breakfast, originally across the Musselburgh Links, is comparable to the more serious 'Crick,' the annual great 'run' at Rugby of about twelve miles, to the village of Crick and back. 'Brooke Hall,' the master's common-room at Charterhouse, is named after Robert Brooke, who was Master of the Charterhouse more than two hundred years before the School was moved to its present site. 'Blandyke,' the monthly recreation day at Stonyhurst, carries us back to the days when the present Stonyhurst was a school at St. Omer, and summer holidays were spent at the neighbouring village of Blandyke or Blandecques. The 'notions' of Stonyhurst, which figure more frequently in Mr. Farmer's book than those of most other schools, hark back in many instances to those old days before religious troubles drove the college to seek an asylum in England. Many of them, like those again of Scottish schools and colleges, point to a closer and longer familiarity with Latin as a living language than Anglo-Saxondom enjoyed or endured.

Lastly, there is the large and ever-increasing phonetic family of *Lusus*, which threatens in no very long time to extrude or absorb all other forms of slang. Nor is the family of a bad stock—at any rate, it can boast connections among the very aristocracy of phonetics. It may seem a far cry from the 'Wagger-Wugger' (*i.e.* the Waynflete 'wine' or wine-party of the Waynflete Essay Society at Magdalen) or from the Carthusian 'combinaggers' (=combinations), or the Harrovian 'footer' and 'brekker' (football and breakfast), to a phrase of Schubert or a cadence of Virgil; yet all these are but expressions of the musical instinct of humanity. They all obey the subtle laws of rhythm and assonance. The bare meaning of a line of Virgil or Tennyson would be the same to the vast majority of readers if the words or their order were changed; but the ear demands a certain com-

bination of sounds. So, for conveying an invitation to a stranger the words 'Waynflete Wine' would be even more effective than 'Wagger-Wugger;' but the musical instinct of the undergraduates of that most musical of colleges has imperiously demanded the more euphonious title. And, just as in music, so in the use of language, there is a universal love of variety, of subtle word-play, of verbal jugglery, of almost infinite suggestiveness and association of sounds. This is well known to students of the canting *argot* of the London streets. There is a language which consists of rhymed equivalents of the ordinary names of things, in which, for instance, the mouth is 'north-and-south,' eyes are 'mince-pies,' gaol is 'bottled-ale' or whatever jingle suits the taste and fancy of the phonetic artist. There was a boy at school with me named Wybergh, who, if his eye should chance upon this page, will, I know, forgive the liberty I am taking with his name. He attained an honourable distinction as a 'kick' (a title corresponding more or less in Wykehamical parlance with the 'back' of more vulgar football). But in earlier days he was apt to miss catching the football in such a way that it struck the ground just out of reach and bounded over his head across the goal-line. This feat was, as any reader of these pages would expect, soon known as a 'Wybergh,' or rather, by an instantaneous application of the principle which I am illustrating, a 'Wobber.' This expressive word served as a groundwork for the conveyance of information; but it did not satisfy our subtler sense of phonetic fitness. And so swift is the intelligence of school-boys, or so sure their creative instinct, that no one was puzzled when a blunder was stigmatised under the title of a 'whip-rack' or a 'tooth-brush,' though I must sadly confess that in later life I am unable to remember or invent with ease the intermediate stages through which the word 'Wobber' was developed into these curious synonyms.

Enough has perhaps been said, not by any means to exhaust the possibilities of the subject, whether for the philologist or the antiquary or the humorist, but to show in some measure what those possibilities are. Public-school boys are in nothing more characteristic of the temper of the British nation than in their contempt for the customs and language of any but their own school. I can well imagine that a malicious person might make the mistake of supposing that my own interest in the 'notions' of other schools than Winchester only exemplifies this law, and

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arises from the serene conviction that Wykehamical notions are in a class of their own wholly *hors concours*. But, however this may be, the time seems to have come for such an attempt as that of Mr. Farmer to enshrine the idioms of different schools in a lexicon. However much we may each look down upon the peculiarities of our neighbour and pride ourselves on our own, the conditions of modern life seem bound sooner or later to reduce both classes almost to uniformity. The communication between boys of different schools is now as frequent as it was once rare. The Scot goes to Winchester, the Devonian to Loretto. The Rugbeian has one brother at Shrewsbury and another at Charterhouse. Each school has its magazine, the editor of which exchanges it with those of all the rest; and the 'Public School Magazine' is fed by and feeds all schools alike. The closer connection, too, of the universities with the public schools and the mutual assimilation of the university man and the public-school boy one to the other—the latter in his increased freedom and extended experience, the former in his lengthened period of boyish games and boyish pupillage—make towards the same end. The terms which, in Mr. Farmer's phrase, are *modish* at the university are instantly *modish* at the public schools. And these are the children of *Lusus*—the *Lusus* of the comic opera, of the music hall, of the New Humour, and of that simpler and more spontaneous kind which I have already illustrated. Indeed, when the higher education of women is completely established, the facility of intercourse will probably have reached that point at which all educated persons will converse in a common language, changing every few months, of which only the pronouns, the articles, and the auxiliary verb will be words to be found in Johnson, Webster, or Murray, or indeed in any dictionary. These monumental works will then be studied by the curious for the elucidation of idioms that will linger in the depths of the country or in the cant of thieves.

NOWELL SMITH.

*THE FOUR FEATHERS.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER XIII.

DURRANCE BEGINS TO SEE.

ETHNE stood at the drawing-room window of the house in Hill Street. Mrs. Adair sat in front of her tea-table. Both women were waiting, and they were both listening for some particular sound to rise up from the street and penetrate into the room. The window stood open that they might hear it the more quickly. It was half-past five in the afternoon. June had come round again with the exhilaration of its sunlight, and London had sparkled into a city of pleasure and green trees. In the houses opposite the windows were gay with flowers, and in the street below the carriages rolled easily towards the Park. A jingle of bells rose upwards suddenly and grew loud. Mrs. Adair raised her head quickly.

'That's a cab,' she said.

'Yes.'

Ethne leaned forward and looked down. 'But it's not stopping here'; and the jingle grew fainter and died away.

Mrs. Adair looked at the clock.

'Colonel Durrance is late,' she said, and she turned curiously towards Ethne. It seemed to her that Ethne had spoken her 'yes' with much more of suspense than eagerness; her attitude as she leaned forward at the window had been almost one of apprehension; and though Mrs. Adair was not quite sure, she fancied that she detected relief when the cab passed by the house and did not stop. 'I wonder why you didn't go to the station and meet Colonel Durrance?' she asked slowly.

The answer came promptly enough.

'He might have thought that I had come because I looked upon him as rather helpless, and I don't wish him to think that. He has his servant with him.' Ethne looked again out of the

¹ Copyright, 1902, by A. E. W. Mason in the United States of America.

window, and once or twice she made a movement as if she was about to speak, and then thought silence the better part. Finally, however, she made up her mind.

‘You remember the telegram I showed to you?’

‘From Lieutenant Calder, saying that Colonel Durrance had gone blind?’

‘Yes. I want you to promise never to mention it. I don’t want him to know that I ever received it.’

Mrs. Adair was puzzled, and she hated to be puzzled. She had been shown the telegram, but she had not been told that Ethne had written to Durrance, pledging herself to him immediately upon its receipt. Ethne, when she showed the telegram, had merely said, ‘I am engaged to him.’ Mrs. Adair at once believed that the engagement had been of some standing, and she had been allowed to continue in that belief.

‘You will promise?’ Ethne insisted.

‘Certainly, my dear, if you like,’ returned Mrs. Adair, with an ungracious shrug of the shoulders. ‘But there is a reason, I suppose. I don’t understand why you exact the promise.’

‘Two lives must not be spoilt because of me.’

There was some ground for Mrs. Adair’s suspicion that Ethne expected the blind man, to whom she was betrothed, with apprehension. It is true that she was a little afraid. Just twelve months had passed since, in this very room, on just such a sunlit afternoon, Ethne had bidden Durrance try to forget her, and each letter which she had since received had shown that, whether he tried or not, he had not forgotten. Even that last one received three weeks ago, the note scrawled in the handwriting of a child, from Wadi Halfa, with the large unsteady words straggling unevenly across the page, and the letters running into each other, wherein he had told his calamity and renounced his suit—even that proved, and perhaps more surely than its hopeful fore-runners—that he had not forgotten. As she waited at the window she understood very clearly that it was she herself who must buckle to the hard work of forgetting. Or if that was impossible, she must be careful always that by no word let slip in a forgetful moment she betrayed that she had not forgotten.

‘No,’ she said, ‘two lives shall not be spoilt because of me,’ and she turned towards Mrs. Adair.

‘Are you quite sure, Ethne,’ said Mrs. Adair, ‘that the two lives will not be more surely spoilt by this way of yours—the way

of marriage? Don't you think that you will come to feel Colonel Durrance, in spite of your will, something of a hindrance and a drag? Isn't it possible that he may come to feel that too? I wonder. I very much wonder.'

'No,' said Ethne decisively. 'I shall not feel it and he must not.'

The two lives, according to Mrs. Adair, were not the lives of Durrance and Harry Feversham, but of Durrance and Ethne herself. There she was wrong; but Ethne did not dispute the point, she was indeed rather glad that her friend was wrong; and she allowed her to continue in her wrong belief.

Ethne resumed her watch at the window, foreseeing her life, planning it out so that never might she be caught off her guard. The task would be difficult, no doubt, and it was no wonder that in these minutes while she waited fear grew upon her lest she should fail. But the end was well worth the effort, and she set her eyes upon that. Durrance had lost everything which made life to him worth living the moment he went blind—everything, except one thing. 'What should I do if I were crippled?' he had said to Harry Feversham on the morning when for the last time they had ridden together in the Row. 'A clever man might put up with it. But what should I do if I had to sit in a chair all my days?' Ethne had not heard the words, but she understood the man well enough without them. He was by birth the inheritor of the other places, and he had lost his heritage. The things which delighted him, the long journeys, the faces of strange countries, the camp-fire a mere spark of red light amidst black and empty silence, the hours of sleep in the open under bright stars, the cool night wind of the desert, and the work of government—all these things he had lost. Only one thing remained to him—herself, and only, as she knew very well, herself so long as he could believe she wanted him. And while she was still occupied with her resolve the cab for which she waited stopped unnoticed at the door. It was not until Durrance's servant had actually rung the bell that her attention was again attracted to the street.

'He has come!' she said, with a start.

Durrance, it was true, was not particularly acute; he had never been inquisitive; he took his friends as he found them; he put them under no microscope. It would have been easy at any time, Ethne reflected, to quiet his suspicions, should he ever

come to entertain any. But *now* it would be easier than ever. There was no reason for apprehension. Thus she argued, but in spite of the argument she rather nerved herself to an encounter, then went forward to welcome her betrothed.

Mrs. Adair slipped out of the room so that Ethne was alone when Durrance entered at the door. She did not move immediately, she retained her attitude and position, expecting that the change in him would for the first moment shock her. But she was surprised; for the particular changes which she had expected were noticeable only through their absence. His face was worn, no doubt, his hair had gone grey, but there was no air of helplessness or uncertainty, and it was that which for his own sake she most dreaded. He walked forward into the room as though his eyes saw; his memory seemed to tell him exactly where each piece of the furniture stood. The most that he did was once or twice to put out a hand where he expected a chair.

Ethne drew silently back into the window rather at a loss with what words to greet him, and immediately he smiled and came straight towards her.

‘Ethne,’ he said.

‘It isn’t true then,’ she exclaimed. ‘You have recovered.’ The words were forced from her by the readiness of his movement.

‘It is quite true, and I have not recovered,’ he answered. ‘But you moved at the window and so I knew that you were there.’

‘How did you know? I made no noise.’

‘No, but the window’s open. The noise in the street became suddenly louder, so I knew that some one in front of the window had moved aside. I guessed that it was you.’

Their words were thus not perhaps the most customary greeting between a couple meeting on the first occasion after they have become engaged, but they served to hinder embarrassment. Ethne shrank from any perfunctory expression of regret, knowing that there was no need for it, and Durrance had no wish to hear it. For there were many things which these two understood each other well enough to take as said. They did no more than shake hands when they had spoken, and Ethne moved back into the room.

‘I will give you some tea,’ she said, ‘then we can talk.’

‘Yes, we must have a talk, mustn’t we?’ Durrance answered seriously. He threw off his serious air, however, and chatted with

good humour about the details of his journey home. He even found a subject of amusement in his sense of helplessness during the first days of his blindness; and Ethne's apprehensions rapidly diminished. They had indeed almost vanished from her mind when something in his attitude suddenly brought them back.

'I wrote to you from Wadi Halfa,' he said. 'I don't know whether you could read the letter.'

'Quite well,' said Ethne.

'I got a friend of mine to hold the paper and tell me when I was writing on it or merely on the blotting-pad,' he continued with a laugh. 'Calder—of the Sappers—but you don't know him.'

He shot the name out rather quickly, and it came upon Ethne with a shock that he had set a trap to catch her. The curious stillness of his face seemed to tell her that he was listening with an extreme intentness for some start, perhaps even a checked exclamation which would betray that she knew something of Calder of the Sappers. Did he suspect, she asked herself? Did he know of the telegram? Did he guess that her letter was sent out of pity? She looked into Durrance's face, and it told her nothing except that it was very alert. In the old days, a year ago, the expression of his eyes would have answered her quite certainly, however close he held his tongue.

'I could read the letter without difficulty,' she answered gently. 'It was the letter you would have written. But I had written to you before, and of course your bad news could make no difference. I take back no word of what I wrote.'

Durrance sat with his hands upon his knees, leaning forward a little. Again Ethne was at a loss. She could not tell from his manner or his face whether he accepted or questioned her answer; and again she realised that a year ago while he had his sight she would have been in no doubt.

'Yes, I know you. You would take nothing back,' he said at length. 'But there is my point of view.'

Ethne looked at him with apprehension.

'Yes?' she replied, and she strove to speak with unconcern. 'Will you tell me it?'

Durrance assented, and began in the deliberate voice of a man who has thought out his subject, knows it by heart, and has decided, moreover, the order of words by which it will be most lucidly developed.

'I know what blindness means to all men—a growing,

narrowing egotism unless one is perpetually on one's guard. And will one be perpetually on one's guard? Blindness means that to all men,' he repeated emphatically. 'But it must mean more to me, who am deprived of every occupation. If I were a writer I could still dictate. If I were a business man I could conduct my business. But I am a soldier, and not a clever soldier. Jealousy, a continual and irritable curiosity—there is no Paul Pry like your blind man—a querulous claim upon your attention—these are my special dangers.' And Ethne laughed gently in contradiction of his argument.

'Well, perhaps one may hold them off,' he acknowledged, 'but they are to be considered. I have considered them. I am not speaking to you without thought. I have pondered and puzzled over the whole matter night after night since I got your letter, wondering what I should do. You know how gladly, with what gratitude, I would have answered you "Yes, let the marriage go on," if I dared. If I dared! But I think—don't you?—that a great trouble rather clears one's wits. I used to lie awake at Cairo and think; and the unimportant trivial considerations gradually dropped away; and a few straight and simple truths stood out rather vividly. One felt that one had to cling to them and with all one's might, because nothing else was left.'

'Yes, that I do understand,' Ethne replied in a low voice. She had gone through just such an experience herself. It might have been herself, and not Durrance, who was speaking. She looked up at him, and for the first time began to understand that after all she and he might have much in common. She repeated over to herself with an even firmer determination: 'Two lives shall not be spoilt because of me.'

'Well?' she asked.

'Well, here's one of the very straight and simple truths. Marriage between a man crippled like myself, whose life is done, and a woman like you, active and young, whose life is in its flower, would be quite wrong unless each brought to it much more than friendship. It would be quite wrong if it implied a sacrifice for you.'

'It implies no sacrifice,' she answered firmly.

Durrance nodded. It was evident that the answer contented him, and Ethne felt that it was the intonation to which he listened rather than the words. His very attitude of concentration showed her that. She began to wonder whether it would be so easy after

all to quiet his suspicions now that he was blind; she began to realise that it might possibly on that very account be all the more difficult.

'Then do you bring more than friendship?' he asked suddenly. 'You will be very honest, I know. Tell me.'

Ethne was in a quandary. She knew that she must answer, and at once and without ambiguity. In addition, she must answer honestly.

'There is nothing,' she replied, and as firmly as before, 'nothing in the world which I wish for so earnestly as that you and I should marry.'

It was an honest wish, and it was honestly spoken. She knew nothing of the conversation which had passed between Harry Feversham and Lieutenant Sutch in the grill-room of the Criterion Restaurant; she knew nothing of Harry's plans; she had not heard of the Gordon letters recovered from the mud-wall of a ruined house in the city of the Dervishes on the Nile bank. Harry Feversham had, so far as she knew and meant, gone for ever completely out of her life. Therefore her wish was an honest one. But it was not an exact answer to Durrance's question, and she hoped that again he would listen to the intonation rather than to the words. However, he seemed content with it.

'Thank you, Ethne,' he said, and he took her hand and shook it. His face smiled at her. He asked no other questions. There was not a doubt, she thought; his suspicions were quieted; he was quite content. And upon that Mrs. Adair came with discretion into the room.

She had the tact to greet Durrance as one who suffered under no disadvantage, and she spoke as though she had seen him only the week before.

'I suppose Ethne has told you of our plan,' she said as she took her tea from her friend's hand.

'No, not yet,' Ethne answered.

'What plan?' asked Durrance.

'It is all arranged,' said Mrs. Adair. 'You will want to go home to Guessens in Devonshire. I am your neighbour—a couple of fields separate us, that's all. So Ethne will stay with me during the interval before you are married.'

'That's very kind of you, Mrs. Adair,' Durrance exclaimed. 'Because, of course, there will be an interval.'

'A short one, no doubt,' said Mrs. Adair.

'Well, it's this way. If there's a chance that I may recover my sight, it would be better that I should seize it at once. Time means a good deal in these cases.'

'Then there is a chance?' cried Ethne.

'I am going to see a specialist here to-morrow,' Durrance answered. 'And, of course, there's the oculist at Wiesbaden. But it may not be necessary to go so far. I expect that I shall be able to stay at Guessens and come up to London when it is necessary. Thank you very much, Mrs. Adair. It is a very good plan.' And he added slowly, 'From my point of view there could be no better.'

Ethne watched Durrance drive away with his servant to his old rooms in St. James's Street, and stood by the window after he had gone, in much the same attitude and absorption which had characterised her before he had come. Outside in the street the carriages were now coming back from the Park, and there was just one other change. Ethne's apprehensions had taken a more definite shape.

She believed that suspicion was quieted in him for to-day, at all events. She had not heard Durrance's conversation with Calder in Cairo. She did not know that he believed there was no cure which could restore him to sight. She had no remotest notion that the possibility of a remedy might be a mere excuse. But none the less she was uneasy. Durrance had grown more acute. Not only his senses had been sharpened—that, indeed, was to be expected—but trouble and thought had sharpened his mind as well. It had become more penetrating. She felt that she was entering upon an encounter of wits, and she had a fear lest she should be worsted. 'Two lives shall not be spoilt because of me,' she repeated, but it was a prayer now, rather than a resolve. For one thing she recognised quite surely: Durrance saw ever so much more clearly now that he was blind.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAPTAIN WILLOUGHBY REAPPEARS.

DURING the months of July and August Ethne's apprehensions grew, and once at all events they found expression on her lips.

'I am afraid,' she said one morning as she stood in the sunlight at an open window of Mrs. Adair's house upon a creek of

the Salcombe estuary. In the room behind her Mrs. Adair smiled quietly.

‘Of what? That some accident happened to Colonel Durrance yesterday in London?’

‘No,’ Ethne answered slowly, ‘not of that. For he is at this moment crossing the lawn towards us.’

Again Mrs. Adair smiled, but she did not raise her head from the book which she was reading, so that it might have been some passage in the book which so amused and pleased her.

‘I thought so,’ she said, but in so low a voice that the words barely reached Ethne’s ears. They did not penetrate to her mind, for as she looked across the stone-flagged terrace and down the broad shallow flight of steps to the lawn, she asked abruptly:

‘Do you think he has any hope whatever that he will recover his sight?’

The question had not occurred to Mrs. Adair before, and she gave to it now no importance in her thoughts.

‘Would he travel up to town so often to see his oculist if he had none?’ she asked in reply. ‘Of course he hopes.’

‘I am afraid,’ said Ethne, and she turned with a sudden movement towards her friend. ‘Haven’t you noticed how quick he has grown and is growing? Quick to interpret your silences, to infer what you do not say from what you do, to fill out your sentences, to make your movements the commentary of your words. Laura, haven’t you noticed? At times I think the very corners of my mind are revealed to him. He reads me like a child’s lesson-book.’

‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Adair, ‘you are at a disadvantage. You no longer have your face to screen your thoughts.’

‘And his eyes no longer tell me anything at all,’ Ethne added.

There was truth in both remarks. So long as Durrance had had Ethne’s face with its bright colour and her steady, frank, grey eyes visible before him, he could hardly weigh her intervals of silence and her movements against her spoken words with the detachment which was now possible to him. On the other hand, whereas before she had never been troubled by a doubt as to what he meant or wished or intended, now she was often in the dark. Durrance’s blindness, in a word, had produced an effect entirely opposite to that which might have been expected. It had reversed their positions.

Mrs. Adair, however, was more interested in Ethne's unusual burst of confidence. There was no doubt of it, she reflected. The girl, once remarkable for a quiet frankness of word and look, was declining into a creature of shifts and agitation.

'There is something then to be concealed from him?' she asked quietly.

'Yes.'

'Something rather important?'

'Something which at all costs I must conceal,' Ethne exclaimed and was not sure even while she spoke that Durrance had not already found it out. She stepped over the threshold of the window on to the terrace. In front of her the lawn stretched to a hedge; on the far side of that hedge a couple of grass fields lifted and fell in gentle undulations; and beyond the fields she could see amongst a cluster of trees the smoke from the chimneys of Colonel Durrance's house. She stood for a little while hesitating upon the terrace. On the left the lawn ran down to the line of tall beeches and oaks which fringed the creek. But a broad space had been cleared to make a gap upon the bank, so that Ethne could see the sunlight on the water and the wooded slope on the further side, and a sailing-boat some way down the creek tacking slowly against the light wind. Ethne looked about her, as though she was summoning her resources, and even composing her sentences ready for delivery to the man who was walking steadily towards her across the lawn. If there was hesitation upon her part, there was none at all, she noticed, on the part of the blind man. It seemed that Durrance's eyes took in the path which his feet trod, and with the stick which he carried in his hand he switched at the blades of grass like one that carries it from habit rather than for any use. Ethne descended the steps and advanced to meet him. She walked slowly as if to a difficult encounter.

But there was another who only waited an opportunity to engage in it with eagerness. For as Ethne descended the steps Mrs. Adair suddenly dropped the book which she had pretended to resume and ran towards the window. Hidden by the drapery of the curtain she looked out and watched. The smile was still upon her lips, but a fierce light had brightened in her eyes, and her face had the drawn look of hunger.

'Something which at all costs she must conceal,' she said to herself, and she said it in a voice of exultation. There was con-

tempt too in her tone, contempt for Ethne Eustace, the woman of the open air who was afraid, who shrank from marriage with a blind man, and dreaded the restraint upon her freedom. It was that shrinking which Ethne had to conceal—Mrs. Adair had no doubt of it. 'For my part I am glad,' she said, and she was—fiercely glad that blindness had disabled Durrance. For if her opportunity ever came, as it seemed to her now more and more likely to come, blindness reserved him to her, as no man was ever reserved to any woman. So jealous was she of his every word and look that his dependence upon her would be the extreme of pleasure. She watched Ethne and Durrance meet on the lawn at the foot of the terrace steps. She saw them turn and walk side by side across the grass towards the creek. She noticed that Ethne seemed to plead, and in her heart she longed to overhear.

And Ethne was pleading.

'You saw your oculist yesterday?' she said quickly as soon as they met. 'Well, what did he say?'

Durrance shrugged his shoulders.

'That one must wait. Only time can show whether a cure is possible or not,' he answered, and Ethne bent forward a little and scrutinised his face as though she doubted that he spoke the truth.

'But must you and I wait?' she asked.

'Surely,' he returned. 'It would be wiser on all counts.' And thereupon he asked her suddenly a question of which she did not see the drift. 'It was Mrs. Adair, I imagine, who proposed this plan that I should come home to Guessens and that you should stay with her here across the fields?'

Ethne was puzzled by the question, but she answered it directly and truthfully. 'I was in great distress when I heard of your accident. I was so distressed that at the first I could not think what to do. I came to London and told Laura, since she is my friend, and this was her plan. Of course I welcomed it with all my heart'; and the note of pleading rang in her voice. She was asking Durrance to confirm her words and that he understood. He turned towards her with a smile.

'I know that very well, Ethne,' he said gently.

Ethne drew a breath of relief, and the anxiety passed for a little while from her face.

'It was kind of Mrs. Adair,' he resumed, 'but it is rather hard on you, who would like to be back in your own country.'

I remember very well a sentence which Harry Feversham——' He spoke the name quite carelessly, but paused just for a moment after he had spoken it. No expression upon his face showed that he had any intention in so pausing, but Ethne suspected one. He was listening, she suspected, for some movement of uneasiness, perhaps of pain, into which she might possibly be betrayed. But she made no movement. 'A sentence which Harry Feversham spoke a long while since,' he continued, 'in London just before I left London for Egypt. He was speaking of you, and he said, "She is of her country and more of her county. I do not think she could be happy in any place which was not within reach of Donegal." And when I remember that, it seems rather selfish that I should claim to keep you here at so much cost to you.'

'I was not thinking of that,' Ethne exclaimed, 'when I asked why we must wait. That makes me out most selfish. I was merely wondering why you preferred to wait, why you insist upon it. For of course, although one hopes and prays with all one's soul that you will get your sight back, the fact of a cure can make no difference.'

She spoke slowly, and her voice again had a ring of pleading. This time Durrance did not confirm her words, and she repeated them with a greater emphasis.

'It can make no difference.'

Durrance started like a man roused from an abstraction.

'I beg your pardon, Ethne,' he said. 'I was thinking at the moment of Harry Feversham. There is something which I want you to tell me. You said a long time ago at Glenalla that you might one day bring yourself to tell it me, and I should rather like to know now. You see, Harry Feversham was my friend. I want you to tell me what happened that night at Lennon House to break off your engagement, to send him away an outcast.'

Ethne was silent for a while, and then she said gently, 'I would rather not. It is all over and done with. I don't want you to ask me ever.'

Durrance did not press for an answer in the slightest degree.

'Very well,' he said cheerily, 'I won't ask you. It might hurt you to answer, and I don't want, of course, to cause you pain.'

'It's not on that account that I wish to say nothing,' Ethne explained earnestly. She paused and chose her words. 'It isn't that I am afraid of any pain. But what took place, took place

such a long while ago—I look upon Mr. Feversham as a man whom one has known well and who is now dead.’

They were walking towards the wide gap in the line of trees upon the bank of the creek, and as Ethne spoke she raised her eyes from the ground. She saw that the little boat which she had noticed tacking up the creek while she hesitated upon the terrace had run its nose into the shore. The sail had been lowered, the little pole mast stuck up above the grass bank of the garden, and upon the bank itself a man was standing and staring vaguely towards the house as though not very sure of his ground.

‘A stranger has landed from the creek,’ she said. ‘He looks as if he had lost his way. I will go on and put him right.’

She ran forward as she spoke, seizing upon that stranger’s presence as a means of relief, even if the relief was only to last for a minute. Such relief might be felt, she imagined, by a witness in a court when the judge rises for his half-hour at luncheon time. For the close of an interview with Durrance left her continually with the sense that she had just stepped down from a witness-box where she had been subjected to a cross-examination so deft that she could not quite clearly perceive its tendency, although from the beginning she suspected it.

The stranger at the same time advanced to her. He was a man of the middle size with a short snub nose, a pair of vacuous protruding brown eyes, and a moustache of some ferocity. He lifted his hat from his head and disclosed a round forehead which was going bald.

‘I have sailed down from Kingsbridge,’ he said, ‘but I have never been in this part of the world before. Can you tell me if this house is called The Pool?’

‘Yes, you will find Mrs. Adair if you go up the steps on to the terrace,’ said Ethne.

‘I came to see Miss Eustace.’

Ethne turned back to him with surprise.

‘I am Miss Eustace.’

The stranger contemplated her in silence.

‘So I thought.’

He twirled first one moustache and then the other before he spoke again.

‘I have had some trouble to find you, Miss Eustace. I went all the way to Glenalla—for nothing. Rather hard on a man whose leave is short!’

'I am very sorry,' said Ethne, with a smile, 'but why have you been put to this trouble?'

Again the stranger curled a moustache. Again his eyes dwelt vacantly upon her before he spoke.

'You have forgotten my name, no doubt, by this time.'

'I do not think that I have ever heard it,' she answered.

'Oh yes, you have, believe me. You heard it five years ago. I am Captain Willoughby.'

Ethne drew sharply back; the bright colour paled in her cheeks; her lips set in a firm line, and her eyes grew very hard. She glowered at him silently.

Captain Willoughby was not in the least degree discomposed. He took his time to speak, and when he did it was rather with the air of a man forgiving a breach of manners than of one making his excuses.

'I can quite understand that you do not welcome me, Miss Eustace, but none of us could foresee that you would be present when the three white feathers came into Feversham's hands.'

Ethne swept the explanation aside.

'How do you know that I was present?' she asked.

'Feversham told me.'

'You have seen him?'

The cry leaped loudly from her lips. It was just a throb of the heart made vocal. It startled Ethne as much as it surprised Captain Willoughby. She had schooled herself to omit Harry Feversham from her thoughts, and to obliterate him from her affections, and the cry showed to her how incompletely she had succeeded. Only a few minutes since she had spoken of him as one whom she looked upon as dead, and she had believed that she spoke the truth.

'You have actually seen him,' she repeated in a wondering voice. She gazed at her stolid companion with envy. 'You have spoken to him? And he to you? When?'

'A year ago, at Suakin. Else why should I be here?'

The question came as a shock to Ethne. She did not guess the correct answer; she was not, indeed, sufficiently mistress of herself to speculate upon any answer, but she dreaded it, whatever it might be.

'Yes,' she said slowly, and almost reluctantly. 'After all, why are you here?'

Willoughby took a letter-case from his breast, opened it with

deliberation, and shook out from one of its pockets into the palm of his hand, a tiny, soiled white feather. He held it out to Ethne.

‘I have come to give you this.’

Ethne did not take it. In fact, she positively shrank from it.

‘Why?’ she asked unsteadily.

‘Three white feathers, three separate accusations of cowardice, were sent to Feversham by three separate men. This is actually one of those feathers which were forwarded from his lodgings to Ramelton five years ago. I am one of the three men who sent them. I have come to tell you that I withdraw my accusation. I take my feather back.’

‘And you bring it to me?’

‘He asked me to.’

Ethne took the feather in her palm, a thing in itself so light and fragile and yet so momentous as a symbol, and the trees and the garden began to whirl suddenly about her. She was aware that Captain Willoughby was speaking, but his voice had grown extraordinarily distant and thin; so that she was annoyed, since she wished very much to hear all that he had to say. She felt very cold, even upon that August day of sunlight. But the presence of Captain Willoughby, one of the three men whom she never would forgive, helped her to command herself. She would give no exhibition of weakness before any one of the detested three, and with an effort she recovered herself when she was on the very point of swooning.

‘Come,’ she said, ‘I will hear your story. Your news was rather a shock to me. Even now I do not quite understand.’

She led the way from that open space to a little plot of grass above the creek. On three sides thick hedges enclosed it, at the back rose the tall elms and poplars, in front the water flashed and broke in ripples, and beyond the water the trees rose again and were overtopped by sloping meadows. A gap in the hedge made an entrance into this enclosure, and a garden seat stood in the centre of the grass.

‘Now,’ said Ethne, and she motioned to Captain Willoughby to take a seat at her side. ‘You will take your time perhaps. You will forget nothing. Even his words if you remember them! I shall thank you for his words.’ She held that white feather clenched in her hand. Somehow Harry Feversham had redeemed his honour, somehow she had been unjust to him; and she was

to learn how. She was in no hurry. She did not even feel one pang of remorse that she had been unjust. Remorse, no doubt, would come afterwards. At present the mere knowledge that she had been unjust was too great a happiness to admit of abatement. She opened her hand and looked at the feather. And as she looked, memories sternly repressed for so long, regrets which she had thought stifled quite out of life, longings which had grown strange, filled all her thoughts. The Devonshire meadows were about her, the salt of the sea was in the air, but she was back again in the midst of that one season at Dublin during a spring five years ago, before the feathers came to Ramelton.

Willoughby began to tell his story, and almost at once even the memory of that season vanished.

Ethne was in that most English of counties, the county of Plymouth and Dartmouth and Brixham and the Start, where the red cliffs of its coastline speak perpetually of dead centuries, so that one cannot put into any harbour without some thought of the Spanish Main and of the little barques and pinnaces which adventured manfully out on their long voyages with the tide. Up this very creek the clink of the shipbuilders' hammers had rung, and the soil upon its banks was vigorous with the memories of British sailors. But Ethne had no thought for these associations. The countryside was a shifting mist before her eyes, which now and then let through a glimpse of that strange wide country in the East, of which Durrance had so often told her. The only trees which she saw were the stunted mimosas of the desert; the only sea the great stretches of yellow sand; the only cliffs the sharp-peaked pyramidal black rocks rising abruptly from its surface. It was part of the irony of her position that she was able so much more completely to appreciate the trials which one lover of hers had undergone through the confidences which had been made to her by the other.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STORY OF THE FIRST FEATHER.

'I WILL not interrupt you,' said Ethne, as Willoughby took his seat beside her, and he had barely spoken a score of words before she broke that promise.

'I am Deputy-Governor of Suakin,' he began. 'My Chief

was on leave in May. You are fortunate enough not to know Suakin, Miss Eustace, particularly in May. No white woman can live in that town. It has a sodden intolerable heat peculiar to itself. The air is heavy with brine, you can't sleep at night for its oppression. Well, I was sitting in the verandah on the first floor of the palace about ten o'clock at night, looking out over the harbour and the distillation works, and wondering whether it was worth while to go to bed at all, when a servant told me that a man, who refused to give his name, wished particularly to see me. The man was Feversham. There was only a lamp burning in the verandah, and the night was dark, so that I did not recognise him until he was close to me.'

And at once Ethne interrupted.

'How did he look?'

Willoughby wrinkled his forehead and opened his eyes wide.

'Really I do not know,' he said doubtfully. 'Much like other men, I suppose, who have been a year or two in the Soudan, a trifled overtrained and that sort of thing.'

'Never mind,' said Ethne with a sigh of disappointment. For five years she had heard no word of Harry Feversham. She fairly hungered for news of him, for the sound of his habitual phrases, for the description of his familiar gestures. She had the woman's anxiety for his bodily health, she wished to know whether he had changed in face or figure, and, if so, how and in what measure. But she glanced at the obtuse, unobservant countenance of Captain Willoughby, and she understood that however much she craved for these particulars, she must go without.

'I beg your pardon,' she said. 'Will you go on?'

'I asked him what he wanted,' Willoughby resumed, 'and why he had not sent in his name. "You would not have seen me if I had," he replied, and he drew a packet of letters out of his pocket. Now, those letters, Miss Eustace, had been written a long while ago by General Gordon in Khartum. They had been carried down the Nile as far as Berber. But the day after they reached Berber, that town surrendered to the Mahdists. Abou Fatma, the messenger who carried them, hid them in the wall of the house of an Arab called Yusef, who sold rock-salt in the market-place, was thrown into prison on suspicion, and escaped to Suakin. The letters remained hidden in that wall until Feversham recovered them. I looked over them and saw that they were of no value, and I asked Feversham bluntly why he, who had not

dared to accompany his regiment on active service, had risked death and torture to get them back.'

Standing upon that verandah, with the quiet pool of water in front of him, Feversham had told his story quietly and without exaggeration. He had related how he had fallen in with Abou Fatma at Suakin, how he had planned the recovery of the letters, how the two men had travelled together as far as Obak, and since Abou Fatma dared not go further, how he himself, driving his grey donkey, had gone on alone to Berber. He had not even concealed that access of panic which had loosened his joints when first he saw the low brown walls of the town and the towering date palms behind on the bank of the Nile; which had sent him running and leaping across the empty desert in the sunlight, a marrowless thing of fear. He made, however, one omission. He said nothing of the hours which he had spent crouching upon the hot sand, with his coat drawn over his head, while he drew a woman's face towards him across the continents and seas and nerved himself to endure by the look of sorrow which it wore.

'He went down into Berber at the setting of the sun,' said Captain Willoughby, and it was all that he had to say. It was enough, however, for Ethne Eustace. She drew a deep breath of relief, her face softened, there came a light into her grey eyes, and a smile upon her lips.

'He went down into Berber,' she repeated softly.

'And found that the old town had been destroyed by the orders of the Emir, and that a new one was building upon its southern confines,' continued Willoughby. 'All the landmarks, by which Feversham was to know the house in which the letters were hidden, had gone. The roofs had been torn off, the houses dismantled, the front walls carried away. Narrow alleys of crumbling fives-courts—that was how Feversham described the place—crossing this way and that and gaping to the stars. Here and there perhaps a broken tower rose up, the remnant of a rich man's house. But of any sign which could tell a man where the hut of Yusef, who had once sold rock-salt in the market-place, had stood, there was no hope in those acres of crumbling mud. The foxes had already made their burrows there.'

The smile faded from Ethne's face, but she looked again at the white feather lying in her palm, and she laughed with a great contentment. It was yellow with the desert dust. It was a proof that in this story there was to be no word of failure.

'Go on,' she said.

Willoughby related the despatch of the negro with the donkey to Abou Fatma, at the wells of Obak.

'Feversham stayed for a fortnight in Berber,' Willoughby continued. 'A week during which he came every morning to the well and waited for the return of his negro from Obak, and a week during which that negro searched for Yusef, who had once sold rock-salt in the market-place. I doubt, Miss Eustace, if you can realise, however hard you try, what that fortnight must have meant to Feversham—the anxiety, the danger, the continued expectation that a voice would bid him halt and a hand fall upon his shoulder, the urgent knowledge that if the hand fell, death would be the least part of his penalty. I imagine the town—a town of low houses and broad streets of sand, dug here and there into pits for mud wherewith to build the houses, and overhead the blistering sun and a hot shadowless sky. In no corner was there any shadow or concealment. And all day a crowd jostled and shouted up and down these streets—for that is the Mahdist policy to crowd the towns so that all may be watched and every other man may be his neighbour's spy. Feversham dared not seek the shelter of a roof at night, for he dared not trust his tongue. He could buy his food each day at the booths, but he was afraid of any conversation. He slept at night in some corner of the old deserted town, in the acres of the ruined fives-courts. For the same reason he must not slink in the byways by day lest any should question him about his business, nor listen on the chance of hearing Yusef's name in the public places lest other loiterers should joke with him and draw him into their talk. Nor dare he in the daylight prowl about those crumbled ruins. From sunrise to sunset he must go quickly up and down the streets of the town like a man bent upon urgent business which permits of no delay. And that continued for a fortnight, Miss Eustace! A weary trying life, don't you think? I wish I could tell you of it as vividly as he told me that night upon the balcony of the Palace at Suakin.'

Ethne wished it too with all her heart. Harry Feversham had made his story very real that night to Captain Willoughby; so that even after the lapse of fifteen months this unimaginative creature was sensible of a contrast and a deficiency in his manner of narration.

'In front of us was the quiet harbour and the Red Sea, above

us the African stars. Feversham spoke in the quietest manner possible, but with a peculiar deliberation and with his eyes fixed upon my face, as though he was forcing me to feel with him and to understand. Even when he lighted his cigar he did not avert his eyes. For by this time I had given him a cigar and offered him a chair. I had really, I assure you, Miss Eustace. It was the first time in four years that he had sat with one of his equals, or indeed with any of his countrymen on a footing of equality. He told me so. I wish I could remember all that he told me.' Willoughby stopped and cudgelled his brains helplessly. He gave up the effort in the end.

'Well,' he resumed, 'after Feversham had skulked for a fortnight in Berber, the negro discovered Yusef, no longer selling salt, but tending a small plantation of dhurra on the river's edge. From Yusef, Feversham obtained particulars enough to guide him to the house where the letters were concealed in the inner wall. But Yusef was no longer to be trusted. Possibly Feversham's accent betrayed him. The more likely conjecture is that Yusef took Feversham for a spy, and thought it wise to be beforehand and to confess to Mohammed-el-Kheir, the Emir, his own share in the concealment of the letters. That, however, is a mere conjecture. The important fact is this. On the same night Feversham went alone to old Berber.'

'Alone!' said Ethne. 'Yes?'

'He found the house fronting a narrow alley, and the sixth of the row. The front wall was destroyed, but the two side walls and the back wall still stood. Three feet from the floor and two feet from the right-hand corner the letters were hidden in that inner wall. Feversham dug into the mud bricks with his knife; he made a hole wherein he could slip his hand. The wall was thick, he dug deep, stopping now and again to feel for the packet. At last his fingers clasped and drew it out; as he hid it in a fold of his jibbeh, the light of a lantern shone upon him from behind.'

Ethne started as though she had been trapped herself. Those acres of roofless fives-courts, with here and there a tower showing up against the sky, the solitary alleys, the dead silence here beneath the stars, the cries and the beating of drums and the glare of lights from the new town, Harry Feversham alone with the letters, with, in a word, some portion of his honour redeemed, and finally, the lantern light flashing upon him in that solitary place—the scene itself and the progress of the incidents were so

visible to Ethne at that moment, that even with the feather in her open palm she could hardly bring herself to believe that Harry Feversham had escaped.

'Well, well?' she asked.

'He was standing with his face to the wall, the light came from the alley behind him. He did not turn, but out of the corner of his eye he could see a fold of a white robe hanging motionless. He carefully secured the package, with a care indeed and a composure which astonished him even at that moment. The shock had strung him to a concentration and lucidity of thought unknown to him till then. His fingers were trembling, he remarked, as he tied the knots, but it was with excitement, and an excitement which did not flurry. His mind worked rapidly but quite coolly, quite deliberately. He came to a perfectly definite conclusion as to what he must do. Every faculty which he possessed was extraordinarily clear and at the same time extraordinarily still. He had still his knife in his hand, he faced about suddenly and ran. There were two men waiting. Feversham ran at the man who held the lantern. He was aware of the point of a spear, he ducked and beat it aside with his left arm, he leaped forward and struck with his right. The Arab fell at his feet, the lantern was extinguished. Feversham sprang across the white-robed body and ran eastwards towards the open desert. But in no panic; he had never been so collected. He was followed by the second soldier. He had foreseen that he would be followed. If he was to escape it was indeed necessary that he should be. He turned a corner, crouched behind a wall, and as the Arab came running by he leaped out upon his shoulders. And again as he leaped he struck.'

Captain Willoughby stopped at this point of his story and turned towards Ethne. He had something to say which perplexed and at the same time impressed him, and he spoke with a desire for an explanation.

'The strangest feature of those few fierce short minutes,' he said, 'was that Feversham felt no fear. I don't understand that, do you? From the first moment when the lantern shone upon him from behind to the last when he turned his feet eastwards, and ran through the ruined alleys and broken walls towards the desert and the Wells of Obak, he felt no fear.'

This was the most mysterious part of Harry Feversham's story to Captain Willoughby. Here was a man who so shrank from the

possibilities of battle, that he must actually send in his papers rather than confront them; yet when he stood in dire and immediate peril he felt no fear. Captain Willoughby might well turn to Ethne for an explanation.

There was no mystery in it to Harry Feversham, but a great bitterness of spirit. He had sat on the verandah at Suakin whittling away at the edge of Captain Willoughby's table with the very knife which he had used in Berber to dig out the letters, and which had proved so handy a weapon when the lantern shone out behind him—the one glimmering point of light in that vast acreage of ruin. Harry Feversham had kept it carefully uncleansed of blood; he had treasured it all through his flight across the two hundred and forty odd miles of desert into Suakin; it was, next to the white feathers, the thing which he held most precious of his possessions, and not merely because it would serve as a corroboration of his story to Captain Willoughby, but because the weapon enabled him to believe and realise it himself. A brown clotted rust dulled the whole length of the blade, and often during the first two days and nights of his flight, when he travelled alone, hiding and running and hiding again, with the dread of pursuit always at his heels, he had taken the knife from his breast, and stared at it with incredulous eyes and clutched it close to him like a thing of comfort. He had lost his way amongst the sandhills of Obak on the evening of the second day, and had wandered vainly, with his small store of dates and water exhausted, until he had stumbled and lay prone, parched and famished and enfeebled, with the bitter knowledge that Abou Fatma and the Wells were somewhere within a mile of the spot on which he lay. But even at that moment of exhaustion the knife had been a talisman and a help. He grasped the rough wooden handle, all too small for a Western hand, and he ran his fingers over the rough rust upon the blade, and the weapon spoke to him and bade him take heart, since once he had been put to the test and had not failed. But long before he saw the white houses of Suakin that feeling of elation vanished, and the knife became an emblem of the vain tortures of his boyhood and the miserable folly which culminated in his resignation of his commission. He understood now the words which Lieutenant Sutch had spoken in the grill-room of the Criterion Restaurant, when citing Hamlet as his example, 'The thing which he saw, which he thought over, which he imagined

in the act and in the consequence—that he shrank from. Yet when the moment of action comes sharp and immediate, does he fail?’ And remembering the words, Harry Feversham sat one May night four years afterwards in Captain Willoughby’s verandah, whittling away at the table with his knife, and saying over and over again in a bitter savage voice, ‘It was an illusion, but an illusion which has caused a great deal of suffering to a woman I would have shielded from suffering. But I am well paid for it, for it has wrecked my life besides.’

Captain Willoughby could not understand, any more than General Feversham could have understood, or than Ethne had. But Willoughby could at all events remember and repeat, and Ethne had grown by five years of unhappiness since the night when Harry Feversham, in the little room off the hall at Lennon House, had told her of his upbringing, of the loss of his mother, of the impassable gulf between his father and himself, and of the fear of disgrace which had haunted his nights and disfigured the world for him by day.

‘Yes, it was an illusion,’ she cried. ‘I understand. I might have understood a long while since, but I would not. When those feathers came he told me why they were sent, quite simply, with his eyes on mine. When my father knew of them, he waited quite steadily and faced my father.’

There was other evidence of the like kind not within Ethne’s knowledge. Harry Feversham had journeyed down to Broad Place in Surrey and made his confession no less unflinchingly to the old General. But Ethne knew enough. ‘It was the possibility of cowardice from which he shrank, not the possibility of hurt,’ she exclaimed. ‘If only one had been a little older, a little less sure about things, a little less narrow! I should have listened. I should have understood. At all events, I should not, I think, have been cruel.’

Not for the first time did remorse for that fourth feather which she added to the three seize upon her. She sat now crushed by it into silence. Captain Willoughby, however, was a stubborn man, unwilling upon any occasion to admit an error. He saw that Ethne’s remorse by implication condemned himself, and that he was not prepared to suffer.

‘Yes, but these fine distinctions are a little too elusive for practical purposes,’ he said. ‘You can’t run the world on fine distinctions; so I cannot bring myself to believe that we three

men were at all to blame, and if we were not, you of all people can have no reason for self-reproach.'

Ethne did not consider what he precisely meant by the last reference to herself. For as he leaned complacently back in his seat anger against him flamed suddenly hot in her. Occupied by his story, she had ceased to take stock of the story-teller. Now that he had ended she looked him over from head to foot. An obstinate stupidity was the mark of the man to her eye. How dare he sit in judgment upon the meanest of his fellows, let alone Harry Feversham? she asked, and in the same moment recollected that she herself had endorsed his judgment. Shame tingled through all her blood; she sat with her lips set, keeping Willoughby under watch from the corners of her eyes, and waiting to pounce savagely the moment he opened his lips. There had been noticeable throughout his narrative a manner of condescension towards Feversham. 'Let him use it again!' thought Ethne. But Captain Willoughby said nothing at all, and Ethne herself broke the silence. 'Who of you three first thought of sending the feathers?' she asked aggressively. 'Not you?'

'No, I think it was Trench,' he replied.

'Ah, Trench!' Ethne exclaimed. She struck one clenched hand, the hand which held the feather, viciously into the palm of the other. 'I will remember that name.'

'But I share his responsibility,' Willoughby assured her. 'I do not shrink from it at all. I regret very much that we caused you pain and annoyance, but I do not acknowledge to any mistake in this matter. I take my feather back now, and I annul my accusation. But that is your doing.'

'Mine?' asked Ethne. 'What do you mean?'

Captain Willoughby turned with surprise to his companion.

'A man may live in the Soudan and yet not be wholly ignorant of women and their great quality of forgiveness. You gave the feathers back to Feversham in order that he might redeem his honour. That is evident.'

Ethne sprang to her feet before Captain Willoughby had come to the end of his sentence, and stood a little in front of him, with her face averted, and in an attitude remarkably still. Willoughby in his ignorance, like many another stupid man before him, had struck with a shrewdness and a vigour which he could never have compassed by the use of his wits. He had pointed out abruptly and suddenly to Ethne a way which she might have taken and

had not, and her remorse warned her very clearly that it was the way which she ought to have taken. But she could rise to the heights. She did not seek to justify herself in her own eyes, nor would she allow Willoughby to continue in his misconception. She recognised that here she had failed in charity and justice, and she was glad that she had failed, since her failure had been the opportunity of greatness to Harry Feversham.

'Will you repeat what you said?' she asked in a low voice; 'and ever so slowly, please.'

'You gave the feathers back into Feversham's hand——'

'He told you that himself?'

'Yes,' and Willoughby resumed: 'In order that he might by his subsequent bravery compel the men who sent them to take them back, and so redeem his honour.'

'He did not tell you that?'

'No. I guessed it. You see, Feversham's disgrace was, on the face of it, impossible to retrieve. The opportunity might never have occurred—it was not likely to occur. As things happened, Feversham still waited for three years in the bazaar at Suakin before it did. No, Miss Eustace, it needed a woman's faith to conceive that plan—a woman's encouragement to keep the man who undertook it to his work.'

Ethne laughed and turned back to him. Her face was tender with pride, and more than tender. Pride seemed in some strange way to hallow her, to give an unimagined benignance to her eyes, an unearthly brightness to the smile upon her lips and the colour upon her cheeks. So that Willoughby, looking at her, was carried out of himself.

'Yes,' he cried, 'you were the woman to plan this redemption.'

Ethne laughed again and very happily.

'Did he tell you of a fourth white feather?' she asked.

'No.'

'I shall tell you the truth,' she said, as she resumed her seat. 'The plan was of his devising from first to last. Nor did I encourage him to its execution. For until to-day I never heard a word of it. Since the night of that dance in Donegal I have had no message from Mr. Feversham, and no news of him. I told him to take up those three feathers because they were his, and I wished to show him that I agreed with the accusations of which they were the symbols. That seems cruel? But I did more. I snapped a fourth white feather from my fan and gave him that to

carry away, too. It is only fair that you should know. I wanted to make an end for ever and ever, not only of my acquaintanceship with him, but of every kindly thought he might keep of me, of every kindly thought I might keep of him. I wanted to be sure myself, and I wanted him to be sure, that we should always be strangers now and—and afterwards,' and the last words she spoke in a whisper. Captain Willoughby did not understand what she meant by them. It is possible that only Lieutenant Sutch and Harry Feversham himself would have understood.

'I was sad and sorry enough when I had done it,' she resumed. 'Indeed, indeed, I think I have always been sorry since. I think that I have never at any minute during those five years quite forgotten that fourth white feather and the quiet air of dignity with which he took it. But to-day I am glad.' And her voice, though low, rang rich with the fulness of her pride. 'Oh, very glad! For this was his thought, his deed. They are both all his, as I would have them be. I had no share, and of that I am very proud. He needed no woman's faith, no woman's encouragement.'

'Yet he sent this back to you,' said Willoughby, pointing in some perplexity to the feather which Ethne held.

'Yes,' she said, 'yes. He knew that I should be glad to know.' And suddenly she held it close to her breast. Thus she sat for a while with her eyes shining, until Willoughby rose to his feet and pointed to the gap in the hedge by which they had entered the enclosure.

'By Jove! Jack Durrance,' he exclaimed.

Durrance was standing in the gap, which was the only means of entering or going out.

(To be continued.)

